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Ætat 36. 1806.

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THE

Life of Wellington

THE RESTORATION

OF THE

MARTIAL POWER OF GREAT BRITAIN

BY THE RIGHT HON.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL

BART., M.P., F.R.S.

Author of "Robert Bruce and the Scottish Struggle for Independence," &c., &c.

WITH MAPS, BATTLE PLANS, AND PHOTOGRAVURES

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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To the BRITISH ARMY, *in profound admiration for its past and equal confidence in its future, this Memoir of its Great Example is dedicated by*

THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE.

IT occurred to me one day not very long ago, while reviewing for one of the weeklies a work on Wellington, so slight as to amount to no more than a sketch, what a delightful task it would be to tell the story of such a life, to trace out the sources of such splendid success, and to make plain the effect upon the British army and on public life of such a conspicuous example. The thought, of course, was dismissed immediately by the reflection how many abler pens than mine had been employed over the ground; but it was revived a few weeks later by a curious coincidence. A letter came from my friend, Mr. R. B. Marston, a partner in the firm of Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston and Co., the publishers of Captain Mahan's *Life of Nelson*, proposing that I should undertake a work on Wellington as companion to that admirable work. It was not without very serious reflection and considerable hesitation that I determined to set my hand to it. On the whole it seemed to be a question of competence in the writer to whom such a task should be committed (a question on which certainly I was the last that should pass

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opinion), for most readers must feel that the chief biographers of the great Duke have been cramped by nearness in time to their subject, and by the desire to avoid controversial matter during the lifetime of some of the actors. Well-nigh half a century having run since the Duke passed away from the scene whereon, for nearly half a century preceding, he had been the most conspicuous figure, the time seems to have arrived when a just review may be attempted of the value of his life-work, an impartial judgment pronounced on his character, and especially his influence on the land forces of his country estimated.

For these purposes there is abundant material. Besides the earlier narratives of W. H. Maxwell, Brialmont, Gleig, Stoqueler, and others, the memoirs of officers under whom the Duke served, of others who served under him, and of his political colleagues, it is hardly possible to open a book dealing with civil, military, or social affairs in England during the first half of the nineteenth century, without finding constant allusion to Wellington. Then there are Wellington's own military despatches, which, entrusted as they were to an excellent compiler, Colonel Gurwood, must ever hold rank among the most remarkable historical works in existence. There is far more than these. The second Duke of Wellington used to say to his old schoolfellow, the late Mr. John Murray: "I cannot write my father's life, but I can at least see that the material is there for a biographer

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some day." Accordingly, with praiseworthy diligence, he set to work and edited fourteen volumes of supplementary military despatches, and eight volumes of civil correspondence, bringing it down to the year 1832. Here, then, are thirty-four volumes, each containing, on an average, about six hundred and fifty closely printed pages—truly he were a bold man who should claim to have extracted all that is of moment from such a vast storehouse.

Special recognition must be made of two recent works on the campaign in the Netherlands, namely, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, by Mr. J. C. Ropes of Boston, U.S. (1893), and *1815—Waterloo*, by M. Henry Houssaye de l'Académie française (1899). These two writers have dealt so exhaustively and impartially with the materials for that part of the history, that they have left very little for their successors to add.

Mr. Marston, not content with setting me to work, has been indefatigable in collecting for me valuable sources of information. In addition to published works, I have been very fortunate in being allowed access to a large quantity of original journals and correspondence. I desire to record my gratitude to the present Duke of Wellington for permission to examine his grandfather's unprinted papers at Apsley House, especially those covering the last twenty years of his life, to give in facsimile the orders pencilled at Waterloo, and to photograph several portraits. His Grace's private secretary, Colonel

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Coxon, with unfailing courtesy and patience, has assisted me constantly in my researches.

The Marquess of Salisbury has placed at my disposal the journals of the second Marchioness, together with her ladyship's correspondence, and that of the second Marquess, with the Duke of Wellington. I desire also to express my thanks to Lord de Ros for allowing me to make use of his father's manuscript notes of conversations with the Duke on military matters; to the Hon. Maud Winn for the correspondence of her grandfather, Captain H. Dumaresq; to the Hon. Gavin Hamilton for the journal kept by his grandfather, Mr. Hamilton of Dalzell, in the Peninsula and Netherlands; to the Hon. Mrs. Swinton, whose personal recollections of the Duke have proved invaluable to me, and who has been at the pains to read the proofs of this work; and to very many others who have furnished me with original documents and references to scarce or forgotten works. It has been remarkable how closely these hitherto unpublished writings corroborate the accuracy of such writers as Lord Stanhope, C. Greville, and J. W. Croker, who have reported the Duke's conversation and opinions.

Critics of the Duke's conduct have been as plentiful as chroniclers. In regard to his military career I have not attempted to add to their number, but have been content to notice and compare the opinions of those writers who seem best qualified to pass judgment on the operations of war, although I have

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ventured to suggest that the Duke's action as a military administrator has not always been fairly esteemed, considering the circumstances and resources of the time. As a statesman it has been customary to speak of him on the one hand indulgently as an impracticable Tory—on the other, disparagingly as an inconsistent politician. I have attempted to show that, although the long-ingrained habit of military command unfitted him for attaining the first rank among Prime Ministers, it was his influence in Opposition which mainly operated to prevent sweeping political change becoming a vast and destructive convulsion. He lost the confidence and, in concert with Peel, shattered the ranks of his own party; but he retained a personal ascendency therein such as Peel never had, and he used it to establish the rule which has become incorporated in its traditions—that the first object must be to carry on the Sovereign's government, and that Ministers must never be overthrown unless their opponents are ready and able and see their way clearly to undertake the responsibility of office.

In another direction I have endeavoured to correct what I believe to be a false impression. Sir William Napier, who exhibited the rare combination of military genius and experience with the power of brilliant literary expression, was a strong Radical. In him the soldier's natural impatience of departmental method and jealousy of civilian control was intensified—embittered—by distrust of a Tory administration. Those difficulties and delays which must occur in

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every protracted campaign were invariably set down by him as the effects of parsimony or mismanagement on the part of the successive Cabinets of Portland, Perceval, and Liverpool, and received unsparing condemnation in the *History of the War in the Peninsula*. Readers of that fine narrative have carried away the impression that Wellington was not properly supported from home, and little attention has been paid to the Duke's frequent assertion to the contrary. I shall esteem myself fortunate if I have succeeded in placing the action of George III.'s Ministers in a truer light, and enabling my countrymen to take a just pride in the resolution and constancy of those statesmen who triumphantly steered the United Kingdom through circumstances of extraordinary difficulty, and brought her to a high position among the nations.

From the earliest times foremost men have become after death the subjects of manifold myth, and stories of every degree of mendacity were sure to gather round such a dominant personality as Wellington. To repeat these, while it might enliven the narrative, would obscure or distort the traits and principles which it has been my chief object to make plain; the only anecdotes, therefore, which have been admitted are such as appear to rest on trustworthy evidence.

HERBERT MAXWELL.

MONREITH, 1899.

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PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES QUOTED.

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ABBREVIATED REFERENCE.	DESCRIPTION.
Apsley House MSS. .	Unpublished correspondence, etc., of the Duke of Wellington at Apsley House, 1833–52.
De Ros MS. . . .	Manuscript notes by William, 20th Baron de Ros, on conversations with the Duke of Wellington, 1836–40.
Dumaresq MSS. . .	Unpublished letters from Capt. H. Dumaresq, 9th Regiment of Foot, to his family and friends, 1815.
Hamilton MS. . . .	Manuscript journal kept by Mr. Hamilton of Dalzell, Scots Greys, in the Peninsula and Netherlands, 1814–15.
Salisbury MSS. . .	Unpublished correspondence between the 2nd Marquess and Marchioness of Salisbury and the Duke of Wellington, with notes of conversation and extracts from Lady Salisbury's journals, 1828–46: from the originals at Hatfield.

Printed.

Belmas	Journeaux des sieges faits ou soutenus par les Français dans la Péninsule de 1807 à 1814, rédigé d'après les ordres du Gouvernement, sur les documents existant aux Archives de la Guerre et au Dépôt des Fortifications. Par J. Belmas, Chef de Bataillon du Génie. 4 vols. 1836.
Civil Despatches . .	Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of F. M. Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G. Edited by his son, the Duke of Wellington, K.G., in continuation of the former series. 8 vols. 1867–73.

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ABBREVIATED REFERENCE.	DESCRIPTION.
Brialmont	History of the Life of Arthur Duke of Wellington from the French of Brialmont, with emendations and additions by the Rev. G. R. Gleig. 4 vols. 1858–60.
Croker	The Correspondence and Diaries of the Right Hon. J. W. Croker. Edited by Louis Jennings. 3 vols. 1884.
Despatches	The Despatches of F. M. the Duke of Wellington during his various campaigns in India, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, the Low Countries, and France. Compiled by Lieut.-Colonel Gurwood. 12 vols. 1834–38.
Gleig	See *Brialmont*.
Greville	Journal of the Reign of George IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria. By Charles C. F. Greville, Esq., Clerk of the Council. 8 vols. 1874–87.
Houssaye	1815—Waterloo, par Henry Houssaye. Paris. 1899.
Jones	Journals of Sieges carried on by the Army under the Duke of Wellington in Spain. By Colonel John T. Jones. 2 vols. 2nd ed. 1827.
Kincaid	Adventures in the Rifle Brigade in the Peninsula, France, and the Netherlands. 2nd ed. 1838.
Larpent	The Private Journal of F. S. Larpent, Esq., Judge-Advocate-General of the British Forces in the Peninsula. 3 vols. 1853.
Lettres inédites . . .	New Letters of Napoleon omitted from the edition published under the auspices of Napoleon III. From the French by Lady Mary Loyd. 1898.
Life and Opinions .	The Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles Napier, G.C.B. By Lieut.-General Sir William Napier. 4 vols. 1857.
Lockhart	Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott. 7 vols. 1837.
Napier	History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France. By Colonel W. T. F. Napier, C.B. 6 vols. 2nd ed. 1832.
Palmerston's Journal	Selections from private Journals of Tours in France in 1815 and 1818. By Viscount Palmerston, K.G. 1871.
Peel Letters	Sir Robert Peel from his private papers. Edited by Charles Stuart Parker. 3 vols. 1891–99.
Recollections . . .	Recollections of the Peninsula. By the author of Sketches in India [Major Moyle Sherer]. 1823.

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ABBREVIATED REFERENCE.	DESCRIPTION.
Ropes	The Campaign of Waterloo: a military history. By John Codman Ropes. New York. 1893.
Siborne	History of the War in France and Belgium in 1815. By Capt. W. Siborne. 2 vols. 2nd ed. 1844.
Stanhope	Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington, 1831–51. 4th ed. 1889.
Stapleton	George Canning and his Times. By Augustus Granville Stapleton. 1859.
Suppl. Despatches . .	Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of F. M. Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G. Edited by his son, the Duke of Wellington, K.G. 15 vols. 1858–72.
Tomkinson	The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsula and Waterloo Campaigns, 1809–1815. By Lieut.-Colonel Tomkinson, 16th Light Dragoons. 1895.
Waterloo Letters . .	Waterloo Letters: A selection of original and hitherto unpublished letters bearing on the operations of the 16th, 17th, and 18th June, 1815, by officers who served in the campaign. Edited by Major-General H. T. Siborne. Abridged edition. 1891.

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THE LIFE OF WELLINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS: CAMPAIGN IN THE NETHERLANDS.

1769–1795.

	The Colleys and the Wesleys.
May 1 (?) 1769.	Birth of Arthur Wesley.
	His boyhood.
March 7, 1787.	Enters the army.
1790.	Elected to the Irish Parliament.
Feb. 25, 1793.	Advocates removal of Roman Catholic disabilities.
	Falls in love.
May . . 1794.	Joins the expedition to the Netherlands in command of 33rd Regiment.
September 15.	The affair of Boxtel.
	The retreat through Holland.
	Incompetence of British officers.
March, 1795.	Returns to England.
	Wesley wishes to leave the army.
June 25 . . .	Applies for a post in the Civil Service.

TOWARDS the middle of the seventeenth century an Irish landowner named Garret Wesley married the daughter of another Irish squire of the name of Colley or Cowley. The families thus united were both of English descent, the Colleys, originally belonging to Rutland, having been settled in Kilkenny probably as early as the reign of Henry IV.;* the Wesleys tracing their descent from Waleran de Wellesley, who was Justice Itinerant of Ireland in 1261, and a cadet of the family of de Wellesley in

The Colleys and the Wesleys.

* Certainly earlier than that of Henry VIII., as stated by Mr. Gleig. In 1407 Walterus Cowylfy was portrieve of Kilkenny, in 1425 John Cowle was appointed commissary of the Earl of Ormonde's army, and in 1496 John Cowley was given the office of Gauger of Ireland under Henry VII.

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Somerset. This Waleran was the progenitor of a long line of landowners in the counties of Meath and Kildare, Christopher, the fifth son of Sir Richard, High Sheriff of Kildare in 1416, being termed "of Dangan," and succeeding as heir to his father in 1449.

Garret Wesley's marriage proving childless, he adopted as his heir Richard Colley, son of his wife's brother, on condition that he assumed the name and arms of Wesley. This Richard, having been elected a member of the Irish House of Commons, was created Baron Mornington in 1747, and married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of John Sale, M.P. for Carysfort. He was succeeded by his eldest son Garret, who in 1760 was raised to the dignity of an earl, chiefly, it is believed, because of the favour his musical gifts secured him from George III.

Birth of Arthur Wesley.

In the year before his promotion, the first Earl of Mornington married the Hon. Anne Hill, eldest daughter of Viscount Dungannon. Dying in 1781, he left his widow in circumstances the reverse of affluent, with five sons and one daughter. Of these sons, the fourth, Arthur, was born in 1769; but it is not a little remarkable that neither the place nor the exact date is positively known. The nurse who attended Lady Mornington in her confinement is reported to have been prepared to state before a Committee of the Irish House of Commons that it took place at Dangan Castle in Meath; according to other contemporary accounts it was in Lord Mornington's Dublin house. The Ulster Office of Arms gives the place as Mornington House, 24 Merrion Street, and the date as 1st May; on the other hand, the parish register of St. Peter's, Dublin, records that on 30th April, Isaac Mann, Archdeacon, christened Arthur, son of the Earl and Countess of Mornington. This discrepancy in dates might be explained by confusion between the old and new style of reckoning, the new calendar having been legally constituted in England and Ireland only as recently as 1752. Thus if Arthur Wesley was born on

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1st May, new style (18th April, old style), he might have been christened on 30th April, old style (12th May, new style). But the obscurity is increased by the following entry in the *Freeman's Journal* of the time:—

"BIRTH.—Dublin, May 6. In Merrion St., the right hon. the Countess of Mornington of a son."

Ecshaw's Magazine, again, for May, 1769, gives the birthday as 29th April, which is irreconcilable with all the others.*

There was no seer to foretell the splendour of the life then begun, nor to show that the exact birthplace of the younger son of an embarrassed Irish peer should ever become a question of the slightest interest to the world at large; and a similar uncertainty hangs over the birthplace and natal day of another boy born in this same year, 1769 — Napoleon Buonaparte, to wit.

His boyhood.

Vain must be all attempts to detect in Arthur Wesley the child and the schoolboy the promise of the man. Precocious boys have been known to ripen into brilliant or able men; dull ones sometimes never emerge from their larval inactivity; more often, perhaps, the fulfilment of manhood falsifies, for good or ill, the expectations created by school days: experience can formulate no rule but that of patience. Arthur was certainly far from being a precocious boy, and there are few or no signs of patience in dealing with him as a stupid one. Even if the theory be well founded that no great man was ever born but of a clever mother, the

* The Countess of Mornington herself wrote, on 6th April, 1815, to Mr. James Cuthbertson, Seton Mains, Tranent, in answer to his inquiry as to the proper day to hold a birthday celebration, informing him that it was 1st May. See *Notes and Queries*, 10th January, 1891, where her letter is printed. The Duke of Wellington himself always reckoned that as his birthday, and he stood sponsor to H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, born 1st May, 1850. The whole question might have been set at rest had the petition been proceeded with which was lodged against the return of the Hon. Arthur Wesley for Trim, on the ground that he was a minor. Mrs. Masters, nurse at Dangan Castle, received an order to attend the Committee with the family Bible in which the births were entered; but the petition was withdrawn.

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intellectual qualities of Arthur Wesley cannot be cited in evidence, so little is known or recorded of the first Countess of Mornington. It is believed that she disliked Arthur as a boy, because of his slow, thick speech and dull manner, which gave him an air of stupidity.* She sent him first, it is believed, to a private school at Chelsea, whence he went to Eton. Finding it difficult, out of her limited income, to meet the expenses of that school, she took the boy with her to Brussels in 1784, where, for twelve months, he was educated in a desultory manner by one M. Goubert, in whose house he and his mother lodged. Arthur had a companion in his studies, John Armytage, the son of a Yorkshire baronet, who kept a diary, in which he entered that Wesley was fond of music and played on the fiddle.†

Lady Mornington seems to have agreed with Armytage in failing to detect in the lad any good natural gifts, except for music. She declared that he was "food for powder and nothing more," and when she returned to England in 1785, Arthur was sent to the French academy at Angers, at the head of which was an accomplished engineer, by name Pignerol.‡

Of Wesley's boyhood, therefore, the record must be pronounced unsatisfactory, both because of its meagre extent, and of the joyless or commonplace character of the few details which have been preserved. That this boyhood was devoid of the sunshine which seems to most of us to lie broadest and warmest on far-off years, may be inferred from some passages

* The widow of William, third Earl of Mornington, Arthur Wesley's elder brother, lived till 1851, and used often to quote the exact words used by her mother-in-law, countess of the second earl. "I vow to God," she would exclaim in the strong language once habitual among fashionable ladies, "I don't know what I shall do with my awkward son Arthur."

† He seems to have inherited his father's gift of music, for in after years, when serving in India, he used to play a great deal on the violin. Suddenly it occurred to him that this was not a very soldier-like accomplishment, and he consigned his instrument to the flames (*Croker*, i. 337).

‡ This was not, as Mr. Gleig and other writers have assumed, a military college, like that at Brienne, where Napoleon was being educated at the same time (*Stanhope*, 166).

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in his subsequent correspondence. Writing in 1797 to urge his elder brother to accept the Governor-Generalship of India, he observed, "I acknowledge that I am a bad judge of the pain a man feels on parting from his family;"—a sentence which, while it might be understood as no more than comparing his condition as a bachelor with that of Mornington as the father of a family, seems also to reflect the loneliness of a life which had never felt the warmth of home ties.

In one respect the characteristics of Arthur Wesley and his family showed a notable difference from what is usually observed in persons of English descent naturalised in Ireland. These, almost invariably, acquire traits and habits of thought more Irish than the Irish themselves; the virtues and foibles of the native race seem to become confirmed and intensified in the alien settlers; but in the case of the Wesleys, and especially in that of Arthur, their manners, their opinions, their aspirations, even their prejudices, seem to have been wholly English.

Reserved, apparently dull, as he was in youth, Arthur Wesley must have been more observant than he got credit for; he certainly stored his memory with more general knowledge than a more brilliant boy might have retained. About this everybody is free to speculate to what extent he will: there is only one shred of authentic evidence that the youth possessed any faculty, but that of music, in a special degree, and that shred came from his own lips in after life. His biographer, the Rev. G. R. Gleig, records that he heard him say more than once that his special talent was rapid and correct calculation, and that "if circumstances had not made him a soldier, he probably would have become distinguished in public life as a financier." *

Enters the army.

The next trace which can be recovered of these early days is in a letter from Lord Mornington to the Duke of Rutland, Viceroy of Ireland in 1786. "Let me remind you," he writes, "of a younger brother of mine, whom you were so

* The Duke of Wellington was what would now be termed a confirmed bimetallist, and in later life often urged on the directors of the Bank of England the advantage of a double standard (*Stanhope*, 158).

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kind as to take into your consideration for a commission in the army. He is here at this moment, and perfectly idle. It is a matter of indifference to me what commission he gets, provided he gets it soon." On 7th March, 1787, Arthur Wesley, being then nearly eighteen, was gazetted to an ensigncy in the 73rd Foot. His subsequent commissions and exchanges ran as follows:—

Lieutenant . .	76th Foot	December 25, 1787
,, . . .	41st Foot	January 23, 1788
,, . . .	12th Light Dragoons .	June 25, 1789
Captain	58th Foot	June 30, 1791
,, . . .	18th Light Dragoons .	October 31, 1792
Major	33rd Foot	April 30, 1793
Lieut.-Colonel. .	,, ...	September 30, 1793
Colonel (Brevet) .	. . . . .	May 3, 1796
Brigadier-General (Egypt)	. . . . .	July 17, 1801
Major-General	. . . . .	April 29, 1802
Lieut.-General	. . . . .	April 25, 1808
General . .	. . . . .	July 31, 1811
Field-Marshal	. . . . .	June 21, 1813

Rapid as was this promotion, especially in its earlier stages, even more so was that of Napoleon Buonaparte, who attained the rank of major-general at seven-and-twenty. It cannot be pretended that young Wesley owed his advancement at first to any unusual proficiency in regimental duties.* Up to the time when, in 1794, he sailed for Ostend in command of the 33rd, he had met with no opportunity of

* It is true that, as he told J. W. Croker, within a few days of his joining the 73rd as ensign, he had one of the privates weighed, first in his clothes only, and then in heavy marching order, in order to ascertain what was expected of a soldier on service. Croker observed that this was remarkable forethought in so young a man. "Why," replied the Duke, "I was not so young as not to know that since I had undertaken a profession I had better try to understand it. I believe," he added, "that I owe most of my success to the attention I always paid to the inferior part of tactics as a regimental officer. There were very few men in the army who knew these details better than I did; it is the foundation of all military knowledge. When you are sure that you know the power of your tools and the way to handle them, you are able to give your mind altogether to the greater considerations which the presence of the enemy forces on you" (*Croker*, i. 337).

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distinguishing himself beyond other officers. His advancement was due to what was all-powerful in those days—family influence and timely pecuniary assistance in purchasing steps.

Of the first three years of Wesley's life as a regimental officer no more can now be gleaned than about his school-days. Simultaneously with his promotion to the rank of captain and his exchange into the 18th Light Dragoons, he received the appointment of aide-de-camp to Lord Westmorland,* Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, having previously been elected to the Irish Parliament to represent his brother's borough of Trim. He voted steadily with his party, and in the brief record of his few speeches in the House one may discern no more than a reflection of Lord Mornington's political principles; but interest attaches to his defence, on 25th February, 1793, of a bill to remove some of the disabilities of Roman Catholics. This measure, introduced into the Irish Parliament at the instance of Pitt, was framed to confer the franchise on Roman Catholics, and to redress some of their educational grievances. It received young Wesley's warm support; but he resisted an amendment to allow Roman Catholics to enter Parliament, on the ground that voters would unite to support any candidate of their own religion, irrespectively of general policy or party ties.

Elected to the Irish Parliament.

Advocates removal of Catholic disabilities.

Lord Westmorland's vice-regal court being a lively one, thither were attracted all the young beauties of Ireland, to enjoy balls and other gaieties. Among them came one whose charms made captive the captain of light dragoons. Wesley became the accepted lover of the Hon. Catherine Pakenham, third daughter of the second Baron Longford; they exchanged vows, but prudent relations raised objection to their ratification, Miss Catherine being no heiress, and Wesley's means no more than slender. The lovers separated, therefore, but on the mutual understanding that they belonged to each other, although there was no regular betrothal. Wesley, resigning his post as aide-de-camp, and desiring to

Falls in love.

* Not Lord Camden, as stated by Gleig and Brialmont.

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drown his disappointment in active service, obtained a majority in the 33rd Regiment, and then, understanding that a corps was about to be formed for special foreign service, wrote to Lord Mornington—

"The way in which you can assist me is to ask Mr. Pitt to desire Lord Westmorland to send me as major to one of the flank corps. If they are to go abroad, they will be obliged to take officers from the line, and they may as well take me as anybody else; but if you think it would be improper to apply to Mr. Pitt upon this occasion, I will refer it to Lord Westmorland himself. I think it both dangerous and improper to remove any part of the army from this country at present, but if any part of it is to be moved, I should like to go with it, and have no chance of seeing service except with the flank corps, as the regiment I have got into as major is the last for service."

Up to this period Wesley's experience of regimental duties must have been very slight, owing to his position on the Lord Lieutenant's staff and in Parliament, but henceforth he applied himself with ardour to the details of his profession. It was at this time that he acquired the habit of private study, without which his mind never could have been furnished to deal effectively with the vast variety of work it was applied to in after years.*

It is necessary, to the right understanding of the materials out of which great actions are wrought, that to this inconspicuous fact should be assigned its real importance. Profoundly did Thucydides understand the essentials of knowledge when he dedicated his history of the Peloponesian war "to those who desire to have a true view of what has

* "In one of the numerous visits which the Duke of Wellington necessarily paid to Calais on his way from France to England, during the continuance of the Army of Occupation in France, while walking from the Hôtel Dessin to the pier to embark, he said to me that he had always made it a rule to study by himself for some hours every day; and alluded to his having commenced acting upon this rule before he went to India, and to his having continued to act upon it."—*Notes on the Battle of Waterloo*, by General Sir James Shaw Kennedy, G.C.B.

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happened, and of the like or similar things which, *in accordance with human nature* (τό ἀνθρώπειον), will probably hereafter happen." It is only the Mascarelles who cherish the belief that *les gens de qualité savent tout sans avoir jamais appris*. Had the course of Wesley's love run smooth—had he possessed the means to enable him to marry Miss Pakenham off-hand—he had never, perhaps, felt the spur of ambition or the necessity of the equipment which knowledge alone can supply—never risen above the ruck of army officers of that day, among whom the standard of professional attainment was so deplorably low.

Expedition to the Netherlands.

If it is difficult to conceive the circumstances which would tempt a British minister and his Cabinet to go willingly to war, it were still harder to imagine a minister and Cabinet more firmly resolved on keeping clear of Continental complications, more sanguine of the prospect of peace, than William Pitt and the Cabinet in which the warlike Lord Grenville had made way for the pacific Lord Dundas as Foreign Secretary.

"Unquestionably," said Pitt, in his budget speech of February, 1792, "there never was a time in the history of this country when, from the situation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace, than at the present moment."

In token of the sincerity of his opinion, Pitt asked for a vote of 16,000 seamen instead of 18,000, withdrew the subsidy hitherto voted for Hessian troops, and repealed several taxes. Yet within twelve months from that time the French Convention had declared war on Great Britain and Holland. This is no place wherein to trace the rapid march of events which led up to that war. Enough to remember how the September massacres, the slaughter of Louis XVI. in January, 1793, the summons of the Convention to all nations to join the Revolution and obtain their freedom—struck horror into the minds of the public in Britain, and convinced Pitt that he could not afford to hold aloof from the struggle. The Duke of York was sent with 10,000 British soldiers to co-operate

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Æt. 25.

with the Austrians and Prussians in driving the French out of the Netherlands. For the first six months of 1793 the Allies were victorious everywhere against the armies of the Republic, and Belgium passed into the possession of Austria.

Early in 1794, another British expedition was prepared to create, under command of the Earl of Moira, a diversion in favour of the French royalists in Brittany, and the 33rd Regiment formed part of the force. But, at the last moment, the project had to be abandoned, for the fortune of war had turned in the Netherlands; the Duke of York was in a critical position and called urgently for reinforcements. Lord Moira, therefore, received orders to proceed to Ostend. Early in May Colonel Wesley sailed from Cork for that destination in command of his regiment, and, as senior officer, took command of the brigade of which it formed part.

Wesley takes the 33rd to the Netherlands.

The young colonel's first experience of active service was a discouraging one.

In the previous autumn the Duke of York had been forced to raise the siege of Dunkirk; the Allies had been driven out of the Netherlands; serious dissensions had arisen between the Austrians and Prussians, and the French, despite the horrible scenes that were being enacted during the Reign of Terror, threatened to annihilate the enemies of their country.

By the time Lord Moira arrived at Ostend, Bruges and Ypres had fallen into the hands of the French; the Duke of York, driven out of Audenarde, was in full retreat along the Scheldt; the Austrians under Clerfayt had sustained a series of defeats from the army of the North under General Pichegru; while the Duke of Coburg had been routed at Turcoing by General Moreau. Pichegru, the son of a labouring man at Arbois, was one of those capable soldiers discovered, like Hoche and Jourdan, by Carnot and Saint Just, and was advanced to high command when the French army was purged of its aristocratic Generals. He had succeeded Jourdan as Commander-in-chief of the army of the North in February, 1794, when his vigorous strategy soon made

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untenable the position of the Allies, which extended from the Sambre to the Scheldt, with Antwerp as a base.* A little later, Jourdan brought into the field the newly formed army of the Sambre and Meuse, and utterly shattered the Austrian power by a defeat inflicted on 27th June. ANN. 1794.

As a consequence of these crushing reverses, the whole line of the Allies was driven back upon Malines and Maestricht; and Moira was exceedingly anxious to join the Duke of York before he should meet with some disaster. He asked Colonel Wesley's opinion as to the best way to reach the Duke; Wesley told him he would save both risk and time by re-embarking the troops at Ostend, and taking them right up the Scheldt or the Maes to the nearest point.

"However, he would not do it, but set off marching along the great canal, choosing most luckily the opposite side from the French, who tried to intercept him. He left me with my brigade of 3000 men to settle matters at Ostend, and then to come on as quick as I could. I obeyed his instructions as to Ostend, and then felt so sure it was best to go round by sea, that I re-embarked, and actually reached the Duke of York some days before him." †

At Malines the Duke of York was joined also by the Prince of Orange with the Dutch army. This position they were soon obliged to yield to the French, and retired upon Antwerp, where they lay till September. In that month the Duke of York began the retreat from Belgium, and entered Holland, of which country the Government, though not, as it turned out, the people, were strenuously opposed to revolutionary principles. General retreat of the Allies.

On 15th September the Duke of York ordered General Abercrombie to retake the village of Boxtel, which had been captured by one of Pichegru's divisions on the previous evening. The British force, consisting of six battalions of The affair of Boxtel.

* Pichegru was found strangled in prison, shortly after the judicial murder of the Duc d'Enghien in 1805.

† *De Ros MS.*

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ÆT. 25. infantry, some cavalry, and a brigade of artillery, advanced to the assault, but were repulsed under a severe fire of musketry, followed by a charge of cavalry. The situation was critical: the British were in danger of being cut to pieces; but Colonel Wesley handled his battalion to such good effect in covering the retreat, that the enemy abandoned the pursuit, and Abercrombie's troops were enabled to rejoin the main body.

This, therefore, which was probably Wesley's first taste of anything more serious than a skirmish, was an unpleasant one, and it was but the prelude to an experience still more disastrous. Young as he was, however, being then but five-and-twenty, his coolness and promptitude on this critical occasion brought him into favourable notice of his superiors. The brigade of three regiments under his command formed the rear-guard of the army during its retreat through Holland.

The retreat through Holland.

A sorrowful, inglorious progress in truth it was. Popular feeling among the Dutch was rising rapidly in favour of union with France and the republican cause. Crossing the Waal in the last days of October, the Duke of York trusted to the French advance being stopped by that river. But a winter of unusual severity set in; rivers and marshes, the immemorial defences of Holland, became hard frozen, and afforded no obstacle to the triumphant divisions of Pichegru, who, flushed with their sweeping success against the Austrians on the Meuse, harassed the retreating British columns in their painful progress to the coast. It fell to Wesley's lot to hold a post on the Waal from October to January, the British head-quarters being five-and-twenty miles distant at Arnheim. During all this time he only saw a general officer once,* and he learnt more by his letters from England of what was passing at headquarters, than he did from headquarters themselves. He perceived the full evil of such defective organisation, and used to say afterwards, "The real reason why I succeeded in my own campaigns is because I was always

* *Stanhope*, 182. He told Lord de Ros, however, that he was visited by General Sir David Dundas about once a fortnight (*de Ros MS.*).

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on the spot—I saw everything, and did everything for myself." ANN. 1794.

Prevalent incompetence of British officers.

Far different was the prevailing practice in the British army at that time. Persons high in command thought far more about the regularity of their own meals than the movements of the enemy. Wesley frequently saw officers, when wine was on the table, fling aside despatches which arrived to await such attention as they might be in a condition to give when they had finished the bottles. As for the business of their profession, the ignorance of most British officers was contemptible.

"There was a fellow called Hammerstein, who was considered the chief authority in the army for tactics, but was quite an impostor; in fact, no one knew anything of the management of an army, though many of the regiments were excellent: the 33rd was in as good order as possible. . . . The system of the Austrians was all the fashion . . . that was, to post themselves with an advanced guard some ten miles in front, and extend their smaller posts much too wide, under the notion that this was a security from surprise. What usually happened was that the distant post was attacked and driven in, the small ones fell back in confusion, and the enemy arrived at their heels and attacked the main army with every advantage." *

A good sketch of Wesley's experience during these dreary winter months is given in one of his letters to Sir Chichester Fortescue:—

20*th December*, 1794.—"At present the French keep us in a perpetual state of alarm; we turn out once, sometimes twice, every night; the officers and men are harassed to death, and if we are not relieved, I believe there will be very few of the latter remaining shortly. I have not had the clothes off my back for a long time, and generally spend the greatest part of the night upon the bank of the river, notwithstanding which I have entirely got rid of that disorder which was near killing me at the

* *De Ros MS.*

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Æt. 25. close of the summer campaign. Although the French annoy us much at night, they are very entertaining during the daytime; they are perpetually chattering with our officers and soldiers, and dance the *carmagnol* upon the opposite bank whenever we desire them; but occasionally the spectators on our side are interrupted in the middle of a dance by a cannon ball from theirs." *

Here is another glimpse of the cheerless scene, when matters were at their worst with the British expedition:—

"A short time before the French took Utrecht from us, I was sent in charge of a Dutch officer to meet General Pichegru, the French Commander-in-chief, upon the ice for some secret communications. I have often thought this Dutchman was in the French interest, and that this had something to do with the betraying of Utrecht. I heard nothing they said, for I was only told to take the man to the rendezvous, allow him to converse with Pichegru, and bring him back. I heard afterwards that the ostensible reason was the recovery of some papers." †

The Duke of York was recalled to England in December, the chief command passing to the Hanoverian Count Walmoden. In January, on the British army moving across the Leck, Wesley was relieved from his post on the Waal. A position was taken up at Amersfoort,‡ whence, on the approach of spring, the British marched eastward to Deventer. Moving thence in a north-easterly direction to the frontier of Hanover, they marched along the Ems, finally embarking, as soon as the ice broke up, at Bremen, and thus returned to England. No laurels were woven for the brave fellows who had come through the privations of that terrible winter. The expedition had been a deplorable failure, all the darker by contrast with Howe's splendid victory over the French fleet at Ushant. It cannot be doubted that Wesley laid deeply to heart the lesson of disaster, and learnt how far the art of war

* *Suppl. Despatches*, xiii. 2. † *De Ros MS.*

‡ Not Amsterdam, as Brialmont has it.

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by land had been forgotten by the countrymen of Marlborough.* ANN. 1795.

Return to England.

Landing with his regiment at Harwich in March, 1795, Lieut.-Colonel Wesley marched it into camp at Warley, and went on leave; first, to take counsel with Lord Mornington in London, and then to Ireland, to look up his constituents at Trim.

From very early days Lord Mornington showed constant care for the interests of his brother Arthur, and from this point it is not difficult to perceive the extent to which they relied on and helped each other. The question on which the younger brother now sought the elder's advice was whether he should continue in the army or seek civil employment under the Government. To have obtained command of his regiment at four-and-twenty may well seem a piece of good fortune that could scarcely, under any circumstances, befal an officer in our own times; nevertheless Wesley was dissatisfied with his profession. No doubt the mismanagement of the Duke of York's expedition had disgusted him with the condition and prospects of the army; but there probably were other considerations to induce him to abandon a career in which he had made such a fair start. Before he could fulfil his engagement to Catherine Pakenham he must secure some pecuniary independence, and acquit himself of his debt to Mornington for money advanced for his promotion. The last could only be accomplished by the sale of his commission, and although Mornington cannot be suspected of being impatient for repayment, he certainly agreed with Colonel Wesley in distrusting the army as a profession, and advised him to apply for a post under the Revenue or Treasury Board. Wesley, therefore, wrote to Lord Camden, who had succeeded Lord Westmorland as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, asking for an appointment on the first vacancy.

Wesley wishes to leave the army.

* Long afterwards, in reply to Lord Mahon, who asked him if his experience in the Dutch campaign had been of service to him, the Duke of Wellington said, "Why, I learnt what one ought *not* to do, and that is always something" (*Stanhope*, 182).

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Æt. 26.

Applies for a civil appointment.

Trim, 25th June, 1795.—"Considering the persons who are at present at those Boards, and those who, it is said, are forthwith to be appointed. . . . I hope that I shall not be supposed to place myself too high in desiring to be taken into consideration. . . . You will probably be surprised at my desiring a civil instead of a military office. It certainly is a departure from the line which I prefer; but I see the manner in which military offices are filled, and I don't wish to ask you for that which I know you cannot give me."

Never, perhaps, did such far-reaching issues hang on the answer vouchsafed to an office-seeker's letter. Nothing could have been more closely in accord with the system of patronage which then prevailed, than that Mornington's influence with Camden and Pelham should have secured a comfortable post for his brother. One is free to speculate to any extent whether the intellect which was to bear so powerful a part in moulding the British empire in the East and the configuration of European kingdoms, might have carved its way to renown in a civil department, or have become merged in the multitude of respectable, useful, but undistinguished lives. One might go further and inquire whether, if Wesley, discouraged by the state of the army and the incapacity of its chiefs, had obtained his desire for civil employment, any other commander might have emerged to balance, and ultimately to overthrow, the menacing ascendency of Napoleon Buonaparte. But to follow such a line of thought speedily leads into a darkness that may be felt. One conclusion only is pressed on the mind of him who contemplates this remarkable attempt to abandon a career which is now inseparable from, and seems indispensable to, European history, and it is this:—that, no matter how resolute and sagacious the man may prove under stress of circumstance, his will in choosing a field for his faculties is subject to indefinite, perhaps providential, but apparently accidental, limitations.

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CHAPTER II.

INDIAN SERVICE.

1795–1800.

Nov. 15, 1795. Col. Wesley sails for the West Indies and is driven back.
April . . 1796. Ordered to East India.
February, 1797. Arrives with his regiment at Calcutta.
Projected expedition against Manila.
Wesley's memorandum on operations against Manila.
The expedition sails, but is recalled.
1798. Lord Mornington becomes Governor-General.
Condition of British India.
Hostile attitude of Tipú Sultan.
The Wesleys alter their name to Wellesley.
October . . . . Surprise of Hyderabad.
New treaty with the Peshwá.
Feb. 22, 1799. War declared against Tipú.
General Harris assumes command of the army.
Wellesley commands the Nizám's contingent.
March . 1799. Invasion of Mysore.
„ 27 . . . . Battle of Malavelly.
April 5 . . . . Wellesley meets with a reverse,
„ 6 . . . . But retrieves it.
„ 6–May 4. Siege and capture of Seringapatam.
May 5 . . . . . Col. Wellesley takes command of Seringapatam.
Renewed difficulty with General Baird.
Difficulty with the Company's servants.
Partition of Mysore.
April . . 1800. Rising of Dhoondia Waugh.
June 14 . . . . Wellesley takes the field against Dhoondia.
September 10. Defeat and death of Dhoondia.
December . . . Col. Wellesley appointed to command expedition against the French.
Jan. 24, 1801. But is superseded by General Baird.
May 7 . . . . . He returns to Seringapatam.
His discontent.

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ÆT. 26.

Col. Wesley sails for the West Indies.

NO record remains of the reception given to Wesley's application for employment in the Civil Service. In the autumn of 1795 he received orders to embark with his regiment in an expedition against the French colonies in the West Indies. The fleet, under command of Admiral Christian, sailed from Southampton in October, but it encountered a terrible calamity. The Hon. Edward Paget, then in the 28th Regiment, gave a vivid account of the disaster in a letter to his father, Lord Uxbridge. In the first place, the transports were badly found and infamously dirty.

"Can you form in your imagination anything more thoroughly inhuman, more thoroughly disgusting, than the transportation of the finest and best troops in England—I believe in the world—in ships that, in the capacity of hospital and prison transports, are so lately returned from the West Indies that they have neither had time to cleanse themselves of the pestilential disorders that infect every board of the ship, or many of them, to get on board the common victualling provisions for a voyage to the West Indies. . . . Not the most urgent occasion, in my opinion, can justify a Ministry's submitting to send out troops in ships that nothing but the basest corruption could ever have tempted men to hire into our service. Oh, my poor dear 28th!"

This was written before they sailed on 15th November. On the 17th they encountered a gale,

"the consequences of which are so thoroughly dreadful that I have scarcely courage to relate them. . . . About four leagues to the eastward of Weymouth one ship struck, and is completely lost with all hands. In Portland Roads are seven or eight transports, the most of which are totally dismasted. The *Alfred* and *Alcmene* are both here; the former has sprung her mainmast. In the bay to the westward of Portland Roads are the remains of seven transports, so *completely* knocked to pieces by the violence of the surf that in no instance could I discover two timbers that had not separated. The bodies of between 400 and 500 soldiers have been collected and buried upon the beach. I

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recognised an unfortunate acquaintance, an officer of the 63rd Regiment. You may guess my anxiety for the remainder of the fleet, as there are four ships of the 28th I know nothing about. A fifth came in here yesterday totally dismasted." * ANN. 1796–7.

Such were the incidents—such the suffering—to be encountered as preparation for a campaign, before the use of steam had rendered obsolete the wooden coffins which often did duty as sailing transports.

Of Wesley's personal experience no record remains, only that on disembarking the 33rd Regiment was sent into quarters at Poole, where, in the following April, he once more received orders for foreign service, this time for India. Being very ill at the time, he was unable to embark with his men, but following them in June, overtook them at the Cape, and arrived with his regiment at Calcutta in February, 1797.† Arrival in India.

Great Britain was now at war, not only with the French Directory, but with Spain, which, since 6th October, 1796, had been in alliance with France. On 16th February the Spanish fleet was destroyed by Sir John Jervis off Cape St. Vincent, which encouraged Pitt to strike at Spain through her colonies. In pursuance of this policy, an expedition was projected by the Governor-General of India, Sir John Shore,‡ to proceed under General St. Leger to attack the Philippine Islands, and the 33rd Regiment was detailed for service in this force. Projected attack of Manila.

* *Letters and Memorials of General the Hon. Sir Edward Paget, G.C.B.* Privately printed, 1898.

† In the dearth of early notices of Arthur Wesley, the following extract from a letter written by Lord Mornington to Sir Chichester Fortescue possesses some interest :—

20th June, 1796.—"My dear brother Arthur is now at Portsmouth, waiting for a wind for India. The station is so highly advantageous to him that I could not advise him to decline it, but I shall feel his loss in a variety of ways most bitterly, and in none more than in the management of Trim, where, by his excellent judgment, amiable manners, admirable temper, and firmness, he has entirely restored the interest of my family."

‡ Afterwards Lord Teignmouth.

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Æt. 27.

From this point may be traced the beginning of Wesley's influence upon military affairs—an influence which soon extended to political administration also. Still a very young soldier, he had applied himself heart and soul to the duties of a commanding officer; every detail of the internal economy of a regiment and of its movement in the field was at his fingers' ends—a qualification which, though it is the rule in the British service now, was undoubtedly a remarkable exception then. Added to this, from his observations on active service he had acquired very clear opinions of tactics and of what was necessary in the profession he had embraced; while sedulous study had enabled him to grasp the great principles of strategy. The weight of his intellect, slow of ripening, but enriched by experience and cultivation, began to impress itself in a remarkable manner on the minds of others.

Of this, the first documentary evidence is supplied in a memorandum on the projected expedition against the Philippines, submitted by Wesley to Sir John Shore, in which he urges strongly that the first step should be the destruction of the Dutch colony of Batavia in the island of Java, "a town surrounded by a slight brick wall, which has no defence." Particulars are given of the strength of the garrison, position of guns and redoubts in the neighbourhood, of the climate and the most suitable season for operations, and he dismisses the apprehension of danger from "the six French frigates which are said to be cruising in the China seas," conceiving the maritime strength of the expedition to be more than equal to deal with these.* In short, the paper, which in its thoroughness of detail and scope is typical of the long series which was to follow it, reads more like the despatch of an officer long versed in Indian affairs and topography, than of one who had been scarcely three months in the East. It betokened what afterwards became a constant characteristic of Wesley's memoranda on projected

* *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 4, note.

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undertakings—namely, the persistency with which he dwelt on such difficulties as had to be reckoned with. Were it not for the zeal and success with which, in every subsequent enterprise, he grappled with and overcame these difficulties, one might interpret his excessive caution in forecast as a symptom of want of confidence or even of timidity. Pitt, however, learned before his death the true value of Wesley's calm survey of a problem. The last conversation which Pitt ever held on public affairs was with Lord Mornington, shortly before his own death, of whose brother Arthur, he observed— ANN. 1797.

"I never met any military officer with whom it is so satisfactory to converse. He states every difficulty before he undertakes any service, but none after he has undertaken it."

Wesley entertained very decided views about the capacity of his superior officers, which he did not hesitate to communicate privately and frankly to Lord Mornington. He observes that in the appointing a Commander-in-chief to the expedition, the Governor-General—

"does so without fear of failure, although he knows his incapacity, as he says he sends with him a good Adjutant-General, and a good Quartermaster-General, and a good army. But he is mistaken if he supposes that a good, high-spirited army can be kept in order by other means than by the abilities and firmness of the Commander-in-chief." *

The correctness of this estimate was not put to the test, for the expedition came to naught. The attitude of Tipú Sultan, monarch of Mysore, the son of Britain's ancient foe Hyder Ali, who had long been in secret negotiation with the French for the expulsion of the British from India, suddenly became very threatening. General St. Leger sailed from Calcutta, but on arriving at Penang, where he was joined by the contingent from Madras, he found orders recalling his troops to their respective Presidencies.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 7.

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Æt. 29.

Lord Mornington becomes Governor-General.

An event was now impending which was to prove of great moment in the professional prospects of Colonel Wesley. The Governor-Generalship of India had been offered to the Earl of Mornington, the friend and favourite of Pitt, in succession to Sir John Shore. Mornington hesitated to accept this brilliant post, involving, as it must, separation from his young family. Wesley besought him to remember that "if for the sake of remaining with them in England, you refuse this offer, you forego both for yourself and them what will certainly be a material and lasting advantage." *

In the end Mornington accepted the appointment, to which he brought the experience of several years on the Board of Control, and, having taken an active share in its deliberations, he was no stranger to questions affecting the Indian dominions of the Crown. From the first he was resolved on resisting the countless solicitations which poured in upon him from acquaintances who had needy relatives to provide for.

"Nor would I," he wrote to Sir Chichester Fortescue in reference to one such application, "accept this high station, unless I were assured of my possessing firmness enough to govern the British Empire in India without favour or affection to a human being, either in Europe or Asia."

The only appointment Lord Mornington bestowed among his own relations was that of private secretary, selecting for that important post his youngest brother Henry.† He arrived in Calcutta on 17th May, 1798.

Condition of British India.

The British possessions in India at this period, and indeed until the abolition of the East India Company in 1858, were governed by a dual control of a peculiar kind. The directors of the Company were the titular rulers of its territory, and all patronage was in their hands, except the appointment of Governor-General and one or two other officials; but their acts were subject to a revision by a Board of Control

* *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 18.

† Afterwards created Lord Cowley.

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Richard, 2nd Earl of Mornington,
afterwards Marquess Wellesley.

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composed of members of the Cabinet, which could even issue orders to the Company's servants without consulting the directors. On the other hand, the Governor-General, while bound to carry out the policy of the Board of Control, was also responsible to the Court of Directors. Mornington, therefore, in taking office, was in the position of a man undertaking to serve two masters, and, in addition, to carry into effect the well-defined views he himself entertained on Indian politics. ANN. 1798.

Although the Company's dominions were tranquil at the time of Lord Mornington's arrival, and although the intentions alike of the Cabinet and the Company towards the independent native princes were distinctly pacific, the elements of disturbance were neither feeble nor remote. French victories in Europe had found their echo in India; French influence was supreme in Mysore, in the Deccan, and with the formidable Marhattá chiefs; French officers were busy drilling and organising the armies of those powerful princes. In fact, the one circumstance which had prevented a formidable coalition of native powers against the English, was the internal animosity and jealousy which prevented them from acting in concert, and finally caused them to take the field separately and successively.

Hostility of Tipú Sultan.

Hardly had the reins of government passed into the hands of Lord Mornington when the designs of the Sultan of Mysore were revealed by General Malartic, French Governor of the Mauritius, who issued a proclamation announcing an alliance between the French Republic and Mysore for the purpose of driving the British out of India, although at first it seemed doubtful how far this proclamation indicated practical co-operation with Tipú, or was merely a ruse to embroil the British with their nominal ally.

In January, on the recall of St. Leger's expedition from Penang, Wellesley,* having seen his regiment settled in

* In 1798 Lord Mornington and his family altered the form of their name from "Wesley" to what was considered the original form—"Wellesley."

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ÆT. 29. quarters in Calcutta, went on leave to visit his friend Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras; and, at the special request of General Harris,* commanding the forces in that Presidency, he remained there after the inauguration of the new Governor, Lord Clive.†

15th September, 1798.—"He (General Harris)," wrote Wellesley to Lord Mornington, "has kept me in Fort George in order, as he says, to co-operate with him in keeping Lord Clive on the right road. I think that we shall succeed in that object."

Every successive page of his correspondence at this time proves how much his superiors in rank relied on the opinions of Colonel Wellesley. His relationship to the Governor-General naturally lent much weight to his views with Lord Clive and General Harris, but it is remarkable how freely and frequently the elder brother sought the younger's advice. Nevertheless, his position at Fort George was a delicate one. He had to control and direct Lord Clive without appearing to exercise authority; and, on the other hand, sought to avert rebukes from Calcutta to which Lord Clive's inexperience and irregularities frequently exposed him.

19th October, 1798.—"He (Lord Clive) improves daily," wrote Wellesley to his brother Henry. . . . "A violent or harsh letter from Fort William (the Governor-General's residence) will spoil all. The conduct which I recommend is perfect confidence with him upon all subjects; and I would extend it even to his government, when it is safe to do so. . . . With regard to my staying here, I am perfectly satisfied to remain here as long as my presence may be necessary, although I consider my situation a very awkward one, and without remedy. I should not, however, wish M(ornington) to know that I feel it at all. As far as my stay

* Afterwards Lord Harris.

† Wellesley, writing to Mornington on 15th September, says: "Lord Clive is a mild, moderate man, remarkably reserved, having a bad delivery, and apparently a heavy understanding. He certainly has been unaccustomed to consider questions of the magnitude that now appear before him, but I doubt whether he is so dull as he appears, or as people imagine he is" (*Suppl. Despatches*, i. 87).

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regards my pecuniary matters, I don't mind it. As the war in Europe is likely to last I shall certainly be made a Major-General in the course of a year.* Whether I return £500 richer in consequence of having been in command, or poorer in consequence of having been in Fort St. George, is a matter of indifference to me." † ANN. 1798.

At first, and for several months, Colonel Wellesley was exceedingly averse from precipitating a rupture with Tipú. He was disposed to give him the benefit of every doubt, and, even when doubts were dispelled, to leave him a loophole of escape—a more statesmanlike view, perhaps, than a mere regimental officer and a keen soldier might have been expected to take. His opinion was conveyed, at the Governor-General's request, in a long memorandum, of which the following sentences may indicate the general drift:—

28th June, 1798.—"If we are to have war at all, it must be one of our own creating; a justifiable one, I acknowledge. . . . In my opinion, if it be possible to adopt a line of conduct which would not inevitably lead to war, provided it can be done with honour, which I think indispensable in this Government, it ought to be adopted in preference to that proposed. . . . I would therefore propose that, in canvassing this question, the evidence of the officers of the *Brisk* should be sunk.‡ . . . Let the proclamation be sent to Tippoo, with a demand that he should explain it and the landing of the troops. Don't give him reason to suppose that we imagine he has concluded an alliance; there is every probability that he will deny the whole, and be glad of an opportunity of getting out of the scrape." §

Even later, when Tipú's bad faith in negotiating with the French had been placed beyond all doubt, and it had been

* He was not promoted till 1802.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 109.

‡ These officers had reported the issue of Malartic's proclamation, and the landing of French volunteers from a Republican frigate at Mangalore.

§ *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 52.

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Æt. 29. discovered that simultaneously he was engaged in an extensive conspiracy with several other Indian princes, Wellesley was far from counselling extreme measures.

19*th September*, 1798.—"I am very anxious," he wrote to Lord Mornington, "to hear of your negociations with the Peshwah and the Nizám, that you may make your proposition, whatever it may be, to Tippoo as soon as possible, and that he may see you are not bent upon annihilating him."

Tipú, a ruler of spirit and great military genius, had no reason to love the British; his experience of British diplomacy under Lord Cornwallis had not imbued him with any deep respect for their fidelity to compacts; he burned to regain the territory which he had been forced to cede in 1791; and, in short, his hatred of England, and his longing to drive the English out of India, were natural and even patriotic. Not the less was it Mornington's duty to be beforehand with him. Although Tipú's overtures to the French in the Mauritius had produced very little except the manifesto, it would have been as foolish to allow him to persist in warlike preparations, as to doubt the intentions of the French to support him in his enterprise. In the Deccan, the Nizám was personally well disposed to the British, though the policy of former Governors-General had done much to throw him into the arms of the French. He had at Hyderabad a well-trained and well-equipped army of 14,000 infantry, with forty pieces of artillery, and, seeing that this force was officered by 125 Frenchmen, the Nizám was practically powerless to resist Tipú's desires.

Surprise of Hyderabad.

Wellesley advised that this army should be disarmed by a bold *coup-de-main*.* In accordance with this advice, a force of 6,000 men was sent without warning to Hyderabad in October. Their task, as it happened, was rendered an easy one, by reason of a mutiny which had broken out among the

* *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 73.

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Nizám's troops against their French officers. The Nizám, only too glad to be quit of them, ordered these officers to surrender; they had no choice but to obey, and were sent as prisoners to England, where, at the Governor-General's request, they were set at liberty and allowed to return to France. The Sepoys lately under their command were reorganised under British officers, and the Nizám bound himself by a new treaty to maintain 6,000 British troops at Hyderabad for the security of his dominions. With the Peshwá, also, the constitutional but nominal head of the great Marhattá confederacy, Mornington concluded a new treaty, binding the Marhattás not to side with Tipú Sultan in the event of his going to war with the British, and then proceeded to Madras to superintend the preparation for war which had been proceeding, lest the negociations with Tipú should break down.

ANN. 1798-9.

New treaty with the Peshwá.

If they had not broken down already, they had ominously hung fire. Fortified by the famous message sent by Napoleon from Egypt, informing him that he was approaching at the head of "a countless and invincible army" to deliver Mysore from the yoke of England, Tipú at first refused to respond to the Governor-General's reiterated overtures and remonstrances. Finally, on 22nd February, 1799, Lord Mornington, perceiving that Tipú's design was "evidently to gain time until a change of circumstances and season should enable him to avail himself of the assistance of France," issued a declaration of war against the Sultan of Mysore, and ordered the British forces to advance. Previous to this, in September, 1798, the 33rd Regiment had been transferred from the establishment of Bengal to that of Madras. In November the army intended, in the event of war, for the invasion of Mysore, was assembled at Arnee, under temporary command of the senior officer, Colonel Aston. This gentleman, having become involved in a dispute with two officers under his command, fought a duel with each, and was killed by Major Allen on 17th

War declared against Tipú Sultan.

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Æt. 29. December,* whereupon Colonel Wellesley took over the command of the troops, pending the arrival of General Harris. To the last moment, though indefatigable in preparing the forces for the field, and arranging commissariat, transport and other essential details, he continued to urge that, if possible, hostilities even yet might be avoided. "I have repeated," he wrote to his brother Henry on 2nd January, 1799, "some of these objections to hostilities so frequently, that I am afraid I shall be accused of boring Mornington." †

General Harris, on arriving in Madras early in February to take over the command of the field forces, issued a general order expressing his sense of the admirable state of organisation and discipline to which Wellesley had brought the troops. These forces now amounted to about 21,000 men, of which 1,000 cavalry, 500 artillery, and 4,300 infantry, were British.

The Governor-General, who, on Colonel Wellesley's advice, had come on a visit to the Madras Presidency, now proposed to visit the camp at Vellore, where the forces were assembled, a project which by no means earned approval from the younger brother, who proceeded to express himself with a vigour which, making all allowance for his relationship with Lord Mornington, can only be described as extraordinary on the part of so young an officer.

Camp near Vellore, 29th January, 1799.—"Your presence in the camp, instead of giving confidence to the general, would, in fact, deprive him of the command of the army. . . . If I were in General Harris's situation, and you joined the army, I should quit it. . . . Your presence will diminish his powers, at the same time that, as it is impossible you can know anything of military matters, your powers will not answer the purpose which even those which he has at present may, if you or Lord Clive are not in the army."

* A full report of this extraordinary affair is preserved in an official memorandum by Wellesley (*Suppl. Despatches*, i. 163).

† *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 156.

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Lord Mornington, whose confidence in his brother's judg- ANN. 1799.
ment must have been almost boundless, took the hint and stayed away. But there were other matters which incurred the displeasure of this terrible young colonel, and no official etiquette restrained him from speaking his mind on them. He resented the power of the Madras Military Board in making appointments to the field force under General Harris, and expressed himself very freely on the subject both to Lord Clive and, as follows, to the Governor-General:—

"I told Lord Clive all this long ago, and particularly stated to him the necessity of giving the General credit, at least, for the appointments of the different Commissaries, if he did not allow him to make them. It was impossible to make him too respectable, or to hold him too high, if he was to be placed at the head of the army in the field. This want of respectability, which is to be attributed in a great measure to the General himself,* is what I am most afraid of. However, I have lectured him well on the subject, and I have urged publicly to the army (in which I flatter myself I have some influence) the necessity of supporting him, whether he be right or wrong."

Marching on 11th February, Harris effected a junction on the 18th with the Nizám's contingent, numbering upwards of 16,000 of all arms, including the British subsidiary force under Lieut.-Colonel Dalrymple. Harris, probably having good reason to desire that Wellesley should have command of this contingent, attached to it the 33rd Regiment; upon which its colonel, as senior officer became commander of that wing of the army of invasion with the rank of brigadier. This appointment gave rise to the first of a series of remonstrances addressed by Major-General Baird† to the Commander-in-chief. Baird conceived himself aggrieved by the

Col. Wellesley commands Nizám's forces.

* There is here no reflection on General Harris's character. "Respectability" is intended to express the dignity of the office of commander-in-chief, of which Wellesley considered Harris was not sufficiently jealous, but submitted too much to departmental interference.

† Afterwards Lieut.-General Sir David Baird.

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Æt. 29. promotion of Wellesley, a regimental officer, to the command of thirteen regiments, while he himself, a major-general, had command of only three. Baird would have been less or more than human had he not detected in this distribution of military patronage symptoms of undue favour towards the Governor-General's brother; as it happened, he was exceedingly human, and protested vehemently against what he considered a slight on himself. General Harris, however, who might well have treated Baird's conduct as a breach of discipline, showed the utmost forbearance and tact, and smoothed the gallant General's ruffled feelings. Theodore Hook, the biographer of Baird, has made upon this incident insinuations equally unfavourable and unfounded. The truth is that Wellesley was far better suited than Baird for the command of the Nizám's contingent, because of the ease with which he conciliated native peculiarities. Baird, although a gallant and skilful officer, was hot-tempered, and the native troops disliked him.*

Wellesley's command was far from being a sinecure, for, in addition to the ordinary anxiety of providing for so large a force in the field, he was not supplied regularly with money to pay the men, and there was the greatest difficulty in obtaining food.† But his duties as a divisional commander did not cause him to remit solicitude for his own regiment. "There is nothing," he wrote to Colonel Close, "about which I am personally so much interested as the proper equipment of the 33rd."

* This matter, and difficulties which subsequently arose between Baird and Wellesley, are fully explained in General Harris's letters. See Lushington's *Life of Lord Harris*, pp. 293-321. In replying to some inquiries about Sir David Baird's life addressed to him by Mr. Lushington, the Duke of Wellington wrote that he would give him all assistance, but "I have not read Sir David Baird's Life. I never read these modern productions called histories, in which my name must be made use of, because I don't want to be tempted to write myself" (*Apsley House MSS.*, 1833).

† He writes to the Governor-General on 4th February, 1799:—"The want of money in my own camp was so great, that I was obliged to borrow from the officers of the army and to sell my own horses to find money to send off two detachments" (*Suppl. Despatches*, i. 192).

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Invasion of Mysore.

The Bombay army, numbering 6,000, advancing from the east under General Stuart, was the first to come in contact with the enemy. It was attacked near Sedaseer on 6th March by a detachment of the Mysore army under the command of Tipú himself, which sustained a decided reverse, and retired from the field with heavy loss. Meanwhile, Harris's columns were laboriously advancing towards Seringapatam, terribly hampered by the enormous amount of baggage and camp followers which invariably accompanied an Indian army on the march,* and by an epidemic which broke out among the draught-bullocks. Nevertheless, though constantly harassed by bodies of Tipú's light horse, nothing fell into the enemy's hands, although, owing to the sickness among the cattle, Harris was forced to abandon stores and ammunition to a very serious extent.

Battle of Malavelly.

On 27th March the enemy were found posted in force on a high ridge three miles east of Malavelly. At ten o'clock the Sultan's artillery opened fire on the British advance guard, to support which Harris threw forward an European brigade and two cavalry corps on the right to support it, while Wellesley, in command of the left, advanced his division in echelon of battalions to the attack. He succeeded in turning Tipú's right flank, upon which General Floyd, seizing the critical moment, detached Colonel Dallas with the 19th Light Dragoons and two regiments of Native cavalry. These, by a well-executed charge, completed the rout of the Mysorean infantry, and the enemy abandoned the position about one o'clock, having lost about 2,000

* The number of bullocks for draught and carriage can hardly be realised by an European. Wellesley informed General St. Leger (*Suppl. Despatches*, i. 204) that there were 60,000 bullocks in the service of the British grand army, besides 20,000 belonging to the brinjarries, or grain-merchants. In the Nizám's contingent there were 28,000 bullocks; "besides all these the number of elephants, camels, bullocks, carts, coolies, plunderers, etc., etc., belonging to individuals in the army, particularly in that of the Nizám, was beyond calculation." When General Harris had formed a junction with General Stuart before Seringapatam, his army was reckoned at 35,000 combatants, with no fewer than 120,000 followers.

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Æt. 29. killed and wounded. The casualties among the British amounted only to 7 killed and 53 wounded.

Owing to the miserable state of his transport, Harris was unable to follow up his success. Although not more than eight-and-twenty miles from Seringapatam, so great was the mortality and exhaustion of his oxen that it took the invading army five days to accomplish that distance.

Arriving at the outworks on 5th April, General Harris directed a simultaneous attack at night by two detachments on two posts occupied by the enemy. The first, under Colonel Shaw, was successful; the second, under Colonel Wellesley, directed against a *tope* * and village called Sultan-

Wellesley meets with a reverse.

pettah, was repulsed with serious loss. This place was 900 yards in advance of the British lines, and about 4,000 from the rampart of Seringapatam. The enemy were on the alert, and received the attacking party with a hot fusillade.

"Near twelve," noted General Harris in his private diary, "Colonel Wellesley came to my tent in a good deal of agitation, to say he had not carried the tope. It proved that the 33rd, with which he attached, got into confusion, and could not be formed, which was great pity, as it must be particularly unpleasant to him." †

Lieutenant Fitzgerald of the 33rd was killed in this affair; twelve grenadiers of that regiment were taken by the enemy, and, on being brought before Tipú, were ordered to be put to death by driving nails into their skulls. Wellesley, as he told Lord Mornington, adopted, after this taste of defeat, a resolve never to attack by night a post which had not been reconnoitred by day. ‡

A great deal has been written about this reverse, which, had it happened to an officer less distinguished in after life, might have been forgotten long ago. The fact is that the attack on the tope was a mistake, as Wellesley

* A grove or thicket. The facsimile opposite page 32 is taken from a letter written by the Duke in 1832 to Colonel Gurwood, then compiling the Indian despatches.

† *Despatches*, i. 24. ‡ *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 209.

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several Publications.

The truth is what I stated. We had not manoeuvred the ground. The Tope was on the Sinnings side of the Nullah in this way.

I had carried the Nullah quite up to the mark O. My advanced guard under Cabt Weed of the 33d was beyond it and through the Tope and he lost Prisoners on the Sinnings side of it. But we could not maintain ourselves in it. In fact we knew nothing about the matter.

PART OF LETTER TO COLONEL GURWOOD IN 1833, IN THE DUKE'S HANDWRITING, REFERRING TO THE AFFAIR OF SULTANPETTAH.

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pointed out to General Harris during the afternoon of the 5th. He wrote to say he did not understand where the post was to be established, and asked the General to ride out in front of the lines and point out the exact place. ANN. 1799.

"Upon looking at the tope as I came in just now, it appeared to me that when you get possession of the bank of the nullah, you have the tope as a matter of course, as the latter is in the rear of the former. However, you are the best judge, and I shall be ready." *

Next morning an accident very nearly intervened to deprive Wellesley of the opportunity which General Harris offered him of retrieving his misfortune. He was put in orders to attack Sultanpettah again, his force this time being strengthened by the Scottish brigade † and three battalions of Sepoys. The appointed hour arrived: the columns were formed up, but where was Wellesley? Precious time was slipping away. General Harris, getting impatient, ordered General Baird to take command. Baird was riding off towards the brigade, not without compunction, because of the chagrin he knew Wellesley would feel when he understood his mischance, when the Commander-in-chief recalled him. "I think," said he, "upon reflection, that we must wait a little longer for Wellesley." In a few minutes the missing Colonel appeared. The morning orders had never reached him. He assumed the command after a brief explanation, immediately advanced to the attack, and carried the obnoxious tope by assault with trifling loss. ‡ But retrieves it.

* *Despatches*, i. 23. † Afterwards the 94th Regiment.

‡ A very different and unpleasant interpretation has been read into this incident in Theodore Hook's *Life of Sir David Baird*. Mr. Lushington, in his *Life of Lord Harris*, quotes Sir David's explanation of it, which he had from his own lips. The Duke of Wellington's recollection of the details differed somewhat from Mr. Lushington's narrative. "Till I heard of these stories in England," he wrote to Colonel Gurwood in 1833, "I never knew that, in my absence in the morning, General Baird had been appointed to command the attack. Indeed I should doubt, from General Harris's papers, that General Baird ever did receive such orders" (*Apsley House MSS.*).

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It was about this time that General Harris received by the hands of a native messenger a letter from the Governor-General, sealed up in a quill for readier concealment in the enemy's country through which it had to pass. This letter contained among other matters the request, "Do not allow Arthur to fatigue himself too much," an injunction which recalls Lord Panmure's famous message to the Commander-in-chief in the Crimea, "Take care of Dowb!" "Arthur" was earning the reputation of a man whom it was impossible to fatigue, and was rapidly acquiring the art of taking care of himself.

Siege and capture of Seringapatam.

After this affair Seringapatam was invested, and siege works were begun. The town was defended by a garrison of 22,000 of Tipú's best troops, with 240 guns; the British force amounting, after the arrival of the Bombay army on 14th April, to 35,000 men, with 100 guns. On 30th April a heavy fire was poured from the British batteries at close range, and on 3rd May the breach was pronounced practicable. The assault was committed to General Baird, who marched 4,300 men into the trenches before dawn on 4th May, and kept them concealed till past noon—the hour when Asiatic troops are generally most drowsy. At one o'clock Baird led the assault under a heavy fire from the fort, Wellesley being left in command of the reserve in the advanced trenches. The resistance was fierce, but the assailants swept all before them: at half-past two they were in complete possession of the fort, the palace, and the town.

Brave Tipú Sultan, lame as he was from an old wound, and despondent as he had been ever since his defeat at Malavelly, fought like a tiger to his last breath. When the British mounted the breach he placed himself, musket in hand, behind a traverse, and kept firing on the assailants till the backward rush of his own men carried him away. His body was found among five hundred corpses piled together in the gateway of the interior work.

The British lost in the assault 8 officers and 75 men killed,

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TIPÛ SAHIB, SULTAN OF MYSORE.

(*From an Indian Painting on Panel at Apsley House.*)

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besides upwards of 300 wounded and missing; the total loss among the 20,000 men actually engaged in the siege, which lasted exactly a month, being 22 officers and 310 men killed, and 45 officers and 1,164 men wounded and missing. ANN. 1799.

General Baird having applied to be relieved in order to make his report in person to the Commander-in-chief, Colonel Wellesley, as next senior officer, took over the command on the morning of the 5th, and became responsible for the security of the town and the property therein. A stern task it was, for war was a worse affair for non-combatants and private citizens in those days than it has been rendered since by the common assent of civilised nations. The scene to which Wellesley applied himself in restoring order is described in a few sentences in his letter to Lord Mornington on 8th May :— Col. Wellesley takes command of Seringapatam.

"It was impossible to expect that after the labour which the troops had undergone in working up to the place, and the various successes they had had in six different affairs with Tippoo's troops, in all of which they had come to the bayonet with them, they should not have looked to the plunder of this place. Nothing, therefore, can have exceeded what was done on the night of the 4th. Scarcely a house in the town was left unplundered, and I understand that in camp jewels of the greatest value, bars of gold, etc., etc., have been offered for sale in the bazaars of the army by our soldiers, sepoys, and foreigners. I came in to take command on the 5th, and by the greatest exertion, by hanging, flogging, etc., etc., in the course of that day I restored order among the troops, and I hope I have gained the confidence of the people. They are returning to their houses, and beginning again to follow their occupations, but the property of every one is gone."

The treasure taken in Seringapatam, besides that made away with in private plunder, was valued at £1,143,216, besides the contents of arsenal and foundry—nearly one thousand guns, and a great store of ammunition.

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Renewed difficulty with General Baird.

Wellesley was confirmed in his appointment as commandant of Seringapatam, which greatly incensed General Baird, who had led with great gallantry the assault on the very fortress in which he had once suffered a long imprisonment. For the second time he found himself superseded by a junior officer, and addressed bitter letters on the subject to General Harris, who showed admirable temper and tact in dealing with his rival subordinates. After rebuking Baird pretty sharply for some of his expressions, he allowed him to withdraw the letters which contained them. He knew that his gallant major-general had good reason for irritation, and, as he informed the Governor-General, Wellesley's selection for this command occasioned a good deal of unfavourable comment. Lord Mornington replied—

". . . With respect to the language which you say people hold of my brother's appointment to command in Seringapatam, you know that I never recommended my brother to you, and, of course, never suggested how or where he should be employed; and I believe you know also that you would not have pleased me by placing him in any situation in which his appointment would be injurious to the public service. My opinion, or rather knowledge and experience, of his discretion, judgment, temper, and integrity are such, that if you had not placed him in Seringapatam, I would have done so of my own authority, because I think him in every point of view the most proper for that service." *

* The following passages from a letter to J. W. Croker, written by the Duke of Wellington many years after Baird's death, convey his own judgment on this subject:—

24*th January*, 1831.—" Baird was a gallant, hard-headed, lion-hearted officer, but he had no talent, no *tact;* had strong prejudices against the natives; and he was peculiarly disqualified from his manners, habits, etc., and it was supposed his temper, for the management of them. He had been Tippoo's prisoner for years. He had a strong feeling of the bad usage he had received during his captivity; and it is not impossible that the knowledge of this feeling might have induced Lord Harris, and those who advised his Lordship, to lay him aside. . . . There were many other candidates besides Baird and myself, all senior to me, some to Baird. But I must say that I was the *fit person* to be selected. . . . It is certainly true that this command afforded one opportunities

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Many passages in Wellesley's correspondence at this time betray the difficulty he always found in co-operating with the political agents of the Company. From the moment he set foot in India till he finally left it in 1805, he never ceased to protest indignantly against the prevalent system which tacitly allowed British agents to receive presents—neither more nor less than bribes—from natives of position. ANN. 1799. Difficulty with the Company's servants.

"Before the General goes, I intend to come to a thorough understanding with him respecting the nature of my situation here. . . . I intend to ask to be brought away with the army if any civil servant of the Company is to be here, or any person with civil authority who is not under my orders, for I know that the whole is a system of job and corruption from beginning to end, of which I and my troops would be made the instruments."

Tipú had fallen, and among his papers had been discovered abundant justification of the opinion formed of the nature of his relations with the French. How to dispose of his realm was now a problem not very simple of solution. To follow Indian precedent by dividing it into three portions, to be assigned respectively to the victorious allies—the Company, the Nizám and the Marhattás (if, indeed, the last-named could be reckoned as allies)—would have been to strengthen unduly two native powers which, on very slight provocation, might combine against the third—a foreign one. This, and other alternative plans were discussed anxiously and at great length in Wellesley's letters to the Governor-General. Finally, it was decided by Lord Mornington to propitiate the Marhattás by assigning to the Peshwá a small portion of the lands of Mysore, and larger portions to the Company and the Nizám respectively; while the residue Partition of Mysore

for distinction, and thus opened the road to fame which poor Baird always thought was, by the same act, closed upon him. Notwithstanding this, he and I were always on the best of terms, and I don't believe that there was any man who rejoiced more sincerely than he did in my ulterior success" (*Croker*, ii. 102).

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Æt. 30. was constituted a dominion under the representative of the Hindú dynasty ousted by Hyder Ali, Tipú's father. This residue, upon the sovereignty of which the new Rájá entered on seating himself on the ancient ivory throne of Mysore, brought him a larger revenue than the whole territory of which his ancestors had been deprived by the usurper.

Colonel Wellesley was greatly responsible for the prudent and generous policy which was followed in providing liberal pensions for the sons and family of the fallen Tipú. A commission of five, including Colonel Wellesley and his brother Henry, was appointed to carry the provisions into effect.

The new Rájá of Mysore was a child of five years old. For the security of his dominion, Wellesley was appointed Commander of the Forces in Mysore, with Lieut.-Colonel Barry Close as political Resident, an officer of whom Wellesley had previously written to Henry Wellesley as "by far the ablest man in the Company's army." * This was an independent command, Wellesley receiving orders from and reporting direct to the Governor-General in Calcutta.

Colonel Wellesley's share in the prize-money distributed among the troops engaged in the Mysore campaign amounting to upwards of £4,000, his immediate intention was to repay the money which Lord Mornington had advanced for the purchase of his lieutenant-colonelcy and other objects. To this proposal Lord Mornington, who had already departed from the precedent set by former Governors-General by declining £100,000 voted to him by the Court of Directors as his share of the prize-money, replied at once—

19*th June*, 1799.—"My dear Arthur, to your letter of the 14th I answer that no consideration can induce me to accept payment of the sums which I formerly advanced to you. I am in no want of money, and probably never shall be; when I am, it will be time enough to call upon you." †

* *Suppl. Despatches*, i. 95. † *Ibid.*, 246, note.

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Four thousand pounds may seem a handsome guerdon for the services of a colonel in a campaign of little more than two months' duration,* yet it would be a great mistake to suppose that Wellesley, either at this or any future period of his Indian service, enriched himself. On the contrary, the expenses of his position at Seringapatam far exceeded his means. ANN. 1799.

Col. the Hon. Arthur Wellesley to the Governor-General.

"14th June, 1799.

"Since I went into the field in December last, I have commanded an army with a large staff attached to me, which has not been unattended by a very great expense, particularly latterly. About six weeks ago I was sent in here with a garrison, consisting of about half the army and a large staff, and I have not received a shilling more than I did at Fort St. George. The consequence is that I am ruined. . . . I should be ashamed of doing any of the dirty things that I am told are done in some of the commands in the Carnatic, as I believe I sufficiently proved at Wallajah-Nuggur; but if Government do not consider my situation here, I must either give up the command or be ruined for ever. I assure you that since December I have in some months spent five times, in others four times, more than I received." †

Rising of Dhoondia Waugh.

For one, at least, of their acts of clemency towards the natives of Mysore, the British conquerors had to pay a heavy price. Some years previously Tipú had captured a notable robber chief named Dhoondia Waugh; and, recognising his ability as a warrior, instead of putting him to death, had induced him to become a Mahomedan and given him a military command. Subsequently, however, Dhoondia incurred afresh the displeasure of his sovereign, and on our troops entering the capital he was found a prisoner in irons.

* Mr. Gleig mentions £7,000 as Wellesley's share in the prize-money; but in a letter of 14th June, 1799, to Lord Mornington he (Wellesley) gives it as 3,000 pagodas in jewels, and 7,000 in money; in all, 10,000 pagodas, equal to about £4,000.

† *Suppl. Despatches.* i. 246.

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ÆT. 30. Without further inquiry he was set at liberty with the other captives, and no sooner was he free than, gathering round him a few of Tipú's disbanded soldiery, he seized some places in the neighbourhood of Bednore, and began a system of raiding and exactions, enforced by deeds of atrocious violence and cruelty. Two light forces, sent by different routes in pursuit of Dhoondia, were successful in several encounters with the mounted banditti; but, being under strict orders not to violate the Marhattá frontier, they could not follow him when he took refuge in the Peshwá's territory on 20th August, 1799.

The Marhattás, having suffered on former occasions from Dhoondia's depredations, had no reason to befriend him; his camp was plundered by a division of the Peshwá's army, and nothing more was heard of him till the following April, when he reappeared at the head of an immense band in the neighbourhood of Savanore, having assumed in the interval the imposing title—King of the World. Wellesley kept a watchful eye on him, and, as soon as he threatened a descent on Mysore, took the field against him with two brigades of cavalry and three of infantry, having obtained authority to pursue the brigands into Marhattá territory if necessary.

While engaged in making his preparations, Wellesley was offered the command of the land forces in an expedition directed against Batavia. Recognising the advantage and credit to be gained on an independent command on active service, his personal inclination would have led him to accept it eagerly, but he would not place his private advancement in competition with the public interest. He laid the matter before Lord Clive, requesting him to reply to the Governor-General, accepting or declining the offer according to his judgment of the best interests of Mysore. Lord Clive earnestly requested the Governor-General to make another appointment, so as to leave the administration of Mysore in the capable hands of Wellesley.*

* *Despatches*, i. 46–54.

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On 16th June the British force crossed the Toombuddra, ANN. 1800. then in high flood, in boats. Several places of importance had by this time fallen into Dhoondia's hands. He had with him a very large army, including the whole of Tipú's fine cavalry, and moved with extraordinary rapidity. For several weeks he eluded the combined pursuit of the British and Marhattá forces, but Wellesley took his garrisons in Bednore and other fortresses by assault. Dummul was stormed on 26th July; on the 30th, by a forced march of 26 miles,* he captured the whole of Dhoondia's baggage and six guns. This was a severe blow to the enemy, whose men began to desert in large numbers. On the other hand, the Marhattá chiefs attached to Wellesley's command gave a lot of trouble, plundering far and wide and refusing to obey his orders. This made him additionally anxious to bring the campaign to a close; he never left Dhoondia at peace for a day, but hunted him with three separate columns, marching between 20 and 30 miles almost daily. On 24th August Dhoondia crossed the Malpoorba into the Nizám's territory; the British force, less lightly equipped, could not ford the river till the 29th, and not before 4th September were the separate columns united for the advance. Wellesley moved with the cavalry in advance of his infantry, which he left to follow under Colonel Stevenson, and, on the morning of the 10th he surprised Dhoondia at a place called Conahgull. Stevenson was 15 miles to the rear; the enemy was about 5,000 strong, all cavalry, double the numbers at Wellesley's disposal; but, having made his front equal to that of Dhoondia by extending his four weak regiments in a single rank, Wellesley charged without a moment's delay. The rebels broke and fled; they were pursued for many miles with heavy loss, Dhoondia Waugh himself being among the slain, and his son, a mere boy, being taken prisoner.† Had this ambitious and able

Defeat and death of Dhoondia.

* "Which, let me tell you, is no small affair in this country" (Col. Wellesley to Major Munro, *Despatches*, i. 60).

† Wellesley maintained this lad till his return to England, when he placed

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warrior been less vigorously dealt with, he would undoubtedly have become the founder of a new dynasty, most dangerous to the British force in India.

In recognition of his services in the conquest and re-settlement of Mysore, the Earl of Mornington, Governor-General of India, was created Marquess Wellesley, 20th December, 1800.

Wellesley appointed to command expedition against the French.

Previous to that date he had relieved Colonel Wellesley from his command in Mysore in order to appoint him to the command of a force of 5,000 troops to embark at Trincomalee, and intended to act against the French either in the Mauritius, or in co-operation with General Abercrombie's army in Egypt. Accordingly Colonel Wellesley went to Trincomalee in December, 1800, and began preparations for the transport and provisioning of his troops. Evidence of the scrupulous care he had schooled himself to take in the humble but essential details of the command of troops may be found in the numerous letters written by him at this time. Long lists of provisions, from beef, flour, and rum down to raisins and vinegar, specifying the amount required for each, are appended *in his own handwriting* to letters addressed to various officials.

He is superseded.

Disappointment was in store for this keen officer. Unfavourable reports continuing to arrive of the movements of the French in Egypt, the Governor-General determined to augment the expeditionary force and to send it to operate in the Red Sea, instead of against the Mauritius. The effect of this rendered it necessary for Lord Wellesley to supersede his brother, who was not of staff rank, in favour of one of the generals then serving in India, which was done by the appointment, on 24th January, 1801, of General Baird to the chief command, Colonel Wellesley being mentioned as second in command.

Before intimation of this change reached Wellesley, he

1,000 pagodas (£400) in the hands of trustees to provide for his education, the interest thereafter to be paid to him for life.

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LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR DAVID BAIRD, K.C.B.

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was authoritatively apprised by Lord Clive of the intention of the British Cabinet, which happened to coincide with that formed independently by the Governor-General—namely, that the destination of the expedition should be, not the Mauritius, but Egypt. Lord Clive forwarded to Wellesley the requisition of the Secretary of State,* upon which Wellesley anticipated what he knew must be the orders of the Governor-General when he should receive, some days later, the same requisition, by embarking the whole of his force at Trincomalee. This he did on his own responsibility, not knowing that he had been superseded, and against the advice of the Governor of Ceylon. He moved the troops to Bombay, where they might be properly provisioned and ready to sail at a day's notice. Thus when Baird, whose temper was not of the most equable, arrived at Trincomalee to take up his command, and found that his subordinate had removed his army to a distant port, his feelings may be more easily imagined than described. ANN. 1801.

Colonel Wellesley's high-handed proceeding might have brought upon him serious consequences with a less friendly Governor-General. Lord Wellesley did, indeed, express some displeasure,† and communications between the brothers were interrupted for some weeks;‡ but in the end the

* See the Duke of Wellington's letter to Colonel Gurwood, *infra*.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, ii. 345.

‡ *The Duke of Wellington to Colonel Gurwood.*

"6th December, 1833.

"I never expected to be superseded in command. I sailed from Trincomalee on the — February, having received the requisition of the Secretary of State, and it appears (from my papers) that on the voyage to Bombay on the 21st of February I received the notification of Sir David Baird's appointment to the command. . . . I take the truth to have been that the General Officers of superior Rank remonstrated; this was very right. I am not surprised at it. I never was. But the Governor-General having made the appointment ought to have had strength to adhere to it; it was of the unexplained supersession that I complained. . . . The reason why we had not sailed on the expedition to the Mauritius was that Admiral Rainier had not arrived with the ships-of-war. This is an important fact, because I considered myself, and I believe I was,

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Æt. 31. Governor-General, on receiving an explanation from his brother, wrote: "I entirely approve of the alacrity and promptitude which you have manifested in moving the troops to the place of rendezvous." *

Wellesley's first impulse, when he did hear of the supersession, was to throw up the appointment. He had been, perhaps, too long in independent command to relish the idea of serving as a subordinate, especially under an officer with whom he had already found it difficult to get on. He persisted in regarding his treatment as a mark of want of confidence. To the Governor-General, indeed, he admitted afterwards that his original appointment to command the expedition—"out of your partiality for me" †—was justifiable ground for displeasure on the part of senior officers; but he complained bitterly, and with something short of dignity, that all his "drudgery" in equipping the expedition and collecting information should be requited by removing him from the command at the very moment when the results of his labour were to be put into effect.

"At least," he wrote to Lord Wellesley, "I should have refrained from incurring expense, and from taking officers from their situations to put them under the command of a man they all dislike.'

Again, to Henry Wellesley—

"I can easily get the better of my own disappointment, but how can I look in the face of the officers who, from a desire to share my fortunes, gave up lucrative appointments, and must go

very ill-used by the Government; and in point of fact I had from that time no communication with the Governor-General Lord Wellesley till after I negociated and signed the Treaty of Peace. This is the reason, for which, after Sir John Malcolm quitted my camp, I corresponded privately upon all public matters with Colonel Shaw and not with Lord Wellesley himself" (*Apsley House MSS.*).

* *Despatches*, i. 77*.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, ii. 362, 16th April.

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with one whom none of them admires? I declare that I can't think of the whole business with common patience." ANN. 1801.

Lord Wellesley showed excellent discretion in soothing his brother's ruffled feelings. He gave him permission to resign his appointment and to resume his command in Mysore,* but at the same time he expressed the belief that "you will better satisfy the exigencies of public duty, and better maintain your character for public spirit, by serving pleasantly and zealously in your actual position."

Colonel Wellesley was too good a soldier to hang back when troops were going on active service. News of Abercrombie's operations against Alexandria came to dispel his reluctance, and at once he placed at General Baird's disposal a vast amount of information he had collected about the shores of the Red Sea.†

In the end, however, he worried himself into a fever. Baird was delayed on the voyage from Ceylon to Bombay; he had not arrived on the 26th March, and Wellesley intended to sail for Mocha and await him there. But the fever prevented his carrying out this project; fortunately, perhaps, for Baird's equanimity, which might not have proved equal to a second pursuit of his army. The fever was followed by something worse; Wellesley contracted a most troublesome complaint —the Malabar itch—from occupying on board ship a man's berth that had been given up to him,‡ and by the time he was cured of that, by means of strong baths of nitric acid, Baird had arrived and sailed for the Red Sea. Then came news from Europe indicating that the operations of the British in Egypt were likely to be abandoned, which decided Wellesley to avail himself of the option left to him, by returning to Seringapatam, which he did on 7th May.

Now, it is impossible to read impartially the voluminous

* *Despatches*, i. 85*.
† *Ibid.*, 89*; *Suppl. Despatches*, ii. 357. 365.
‡ *Stanhope*, 103.

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correspondence about this affair without receiving the impression that, had Wellesley retained the chief command, neither fever nor Malabar itch would have kept him from accompanying the expedition. At all hazards, and in spite of all suffering, he would have persisted—nay, he never would have fallen sick. It would be foolish to assume that, because Wellesley in after years proved himself more resolute and more successful than any other military commander in Europe, he was therefore at all times superior to human weakness. The conduct of life is comparatively simple to one who has either preserved his obscurity or achieved fame. At this period, Arthur Wellesley had done neither; he had attained distinction—a difficult middle state, wherein a man is most apt to betray inequality of balance. How blind the wisest of us are to what is best for us! Baird, envy of whose prospects of distinction in Egypt drove Wellesley nearly frantic with chagrin, reached Rosetta just as the French were on the point of evacuating Alexandria; while for Wellesley, reluctantly remaining behind, lay close at hand the work which was to bring him his first meed of fame.

Wellesley's chagrin.

It was a considerable time before he recovered his equanimity. He contemplated returning to England, which would have been practically to abandon his profession. This idea, repeatedly communicated to his brother Henry,* with whom his correspondence was at all times most intimate, met with no encouragement from that wise counsellor. Henry's letters are full of calm, sympathetic advice, and may have had no little effect in restoring the wounded spirit of the commander of Mysore. In return, Arthur Wellesley gave Henry at least one valuable piece of advice. Hearing that he, too, had been ill, he wrote on 8th July, 1801—

"I know but one receipt for good health in this country, and that is to live moderately, to drink little or no wine, to use exercise, to keep the mind employed, and, if possible, to keep in

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ii. 409, 474.

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good humour with the world. The last is most difficult, for, as you have often observed, there is scarcely a good-tempered man in India." * ANN. 1801.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ii. 501. Thirty-six years later the Duke of Wellington observed to Lord Mahon: "Through life I have avoided medicine as much as I could, but always eaten and drunk very little" (*Stanhope*, 103). The austerity of his diet and his indifference to luxury, sometimes bore hardly on his companions. When travelling with Wellington in France in 1814, Alava always received "At daylight" as the answer to inquiry when they should start, and "Cold meat" to that of what they should have for dinner. "J'en ai pris en horreur," Alava used to say, "ces deux mots 'daylight' et 'cold meat'" (*Stanhope*, 29).

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CHAPTER III.

First Marhattá Campaign.

1801–1805.

1801. Dissatisfaction in England with Lord Wellesley.
1802. Threatening posture of the Marhattás.
Holkar invades the Peshwá's territory.
October 25 . Defeats Sindhia and the Peshwá.
December 31. Treaty of Bassein signed.
March 9, 1803. General Wellesley takes the field against Holkar.
April 20 . . . Captures Poona.
May 13 . . . Restoration of the Peshwá.
June 26 . . . General Wellesley appointed Commander-in-chief in the Marhattá states.
Negociations with Sindhia.
August 6 . . War declared against Sindhia and the Rájá of Berar.
„ 11 . . Capture of Ahmadnagar.
General Lake's operations.
September 23. Battle of Assaye.
November 27. Battle of Argaum.
December 15. Siege and capture of Gawilghur.
„ 17. Peace concluded with Sindhia and the Rájá.
Feb. 5, 1804. Dispersal of Marhattá brigands.
General Wellesley's discontent and resignation.
Character of the Wellington despatches.
Wellesley's friendship with Sir John Malcolm.
War with Holkar.
November 9. Wellesley resumes his command in Mysore.
He receives knighthood and sails for England.
Summary of his Indian service.

Murmurs against Lord Wellesley.

THE Marquess Wellesley's administration of India had been a brilliant success. Not only had a large and valuable territory been added to the British dominions, but the authority of the East India Company and the British

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Government had been consolidated and established on a just and durable basis. Nevertheless, there were not wanting, both in India and in England, many persons who looked with disfavour on the policy of the Governor-General and its results. Features of that policy had been the infringement of the monopoly hitherto enjoyed in the export trade by placing private merchants on a more equal footing with the privileged company, and the encouragement of shipbuilding in India to the alleged detriment of British yards. Parliamentary criticism, too, though possibly not so well—or at least so copiously—informed as at the present day, was just as nimble and persistent. The "Perish India" party is no creation of recent years, and the resignation of Pitt in March, 1801, exposed Lord Wellesley to the growing hostility of his critics. It was whispered, most falsely, that he had enriched himself and his brothers enormously, and that his public administration was grossly extravagant. He received orders from the Court of Directors to reduce largely the military forces in India, a course which he knew would be inconsistent with the security of British rule. But that which wounded him most cruelly was an order issued by the Court for the reduction of Colonel Wellesley's allowances as Governor of Mysore.* Fully conscious of the degree to which he himself had reformed the dealings of the Company with the native princes, a proceeding which those of the old school regarded as quixotic and irritating,† he was equally confident in the absolute integrity of his brother.‡ ANN. 1801.

* For his services against Dhoondia Waugh the Court made Colonel Wellesley a special grant of 10,000 pagodas (£4,000).

† Clive amassed a huge fortune during his administration. It may be remembered that he accepted £160,000 and a life annuity of £27,000 a year for placing Meer Jaffeer on the throne of Bengal.

‡ Colonel Wellesley read a pretty sharp lesson to a certain British officer who conveyed to him a proposal from the Rájá of Kittoor, one of the minor Marhattá chiefs, who desired to be taken under British protection. The proposal contained the offer of a gift to Wellesley of 10,000 pagodas and another to the said officer of 4,000, provided the arrangement were effected.

"In respect to the bribe offered to you and myself, I am surprised that any

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"The Court," wrote Lord Wellesley to the Prime Minister, Mr. Addington, "by reducing the established allowance of Colonel Wellesley, has offered me the most direct, marked, and disgusting personal indignity which could be devised. The effect of this order must be to inculcate an opinion that I have suffered my brother to derive emoluments beyond the limits of justice and propriety, and that I have exhibited an example of profusion and extravagance in an allowance granted to my nearest connexion." *

Deeply affronted by these and other humiliating acts of the Court of Directors, Lord Wellesley tendered his immediate resignation; but internal affairs in India had taken such an unfavourable turn, that the Court recoiled from the idea of placing them in less experienced hands, and, at their earnest request, he consented to retain his office till 1804.†

Threatening posture of the Marhattás.

The danger which the Government of India had in view arose from the attitude of the Marhattá nation. This great confederation represented the empire carved by Sevajee in 1680 out of the dominion of Aurangzeb, and was ruled by five semi-independent and powerful princes—namely, the Peshwá of Poona, in the hill-country of the Western Ghâts; Sindhia of Gwalior and Holkar of India, in Central India; the Gaikwár of Baroda; and, on the east, the Bhonsla Rájá of Nágpur, ruling from Berar to the coast of Orissa. Nominally the Peshwá was suzerain of the others; on the other hand, while each of the five Princes was free to form alliances affecting only his own realm, none of them—not even the Peshwá—could enter upon engagements affecting the Marhattá nation as a whole, except with the concurrence of all the rest. Diplomatic relations with rulers acting under such a constitution were delicate and complicated. It had been

man, in the character of a British officer, should not have given the Rajah to understand that the offer would be considered an insult. . . . I can attribute your conduct on this occasion to nothing but the most inconsiderate indiscretion, and to a wish to benefit yourself, which got the better of your prudence" (*Suppl. Despatches*, iii. 548).

* *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches*, vol. iii. p. iv. † *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

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the desire of the British Government to contract an alliance with the Marhattá confederation as a whole, but all attempts to do so had been baffled hitherto by the chronic jealousy and hostility between the chiefs themselves, and by the fact that the powerful armies of Sindhia had for many years been organised and in a large measure officered by Frenchmen. Lord Wellesley had often been strongly urged by his Council to put an end to the suspense by undertaking aggressive operations against the Marhattás, advice which Colonel Wellesley had as often and as strenuously opposed. ANN. 1802.

"They breathe nothing but war, and appear to have adopted some of the French principles on that subject. They seem to think that because the Mahrattás do not choose to ally themselves with us more closely . . . it is perfectly justifiable and proper that we should go to war with them."*

At great length he discussed the political, as well as the military aspects of the question, displaying a clear perception of what are now recognised to be the true interests of Great Britain in India, and deprecating above all things harshness, hastiness, and the slightest taint of insincerity in dealing with native rulers. Arthur Wellesley was a soldier, but he was a gifted administrator also, and never suffered professional desire for distinction to incline him to fight when it was possible to negociate.

Holkar invades the Peshwá's territory.

Early in 1802 Lord Wellesley concluded a defensive alliance with the Gaikwar of Baroda. Negociations for a similar one with the Peshwá had been pending for long, but Sindhia's influence was paramount at the time in the court of Poona, and was exerted to prevent an agreement. Towards the autumn, however, events took a turn which threw the Peshwá into the arms of the British. Holkar, jealous of Sindhia's military predominance, had followed his rival's example in obtaining French officers to organise and drill his forces. Having by this time not less than 80,000 men, chiefly

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ii. 255, 258, 268, etc.

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Æt. 33. cavalry, under arms, by a sudden and rapid movement he crossed the Nerbudda, swept down upon Poona, and, on 25th October, 1802, inflicted a total defeat on the combined armies of Sindhia and the Peshwá.

The treaty of Bassein. The Peshwá fled for refuge under the British flag, and, on 31st December, signed at Bassein a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with the Governor-General. One of the articles stipulated for the maintenance at Poona of 6,000 British troops at the Peshwá's charges; but, inasmuch as Poona had fallen into the hands of Holkar, the first effect of the treaty was to render incumbent on the Government of India his expulsion and the restoration of the Peshwá.

War with Holkar. A corps of observation of nearly 20,000 men having been sent by Lord Clive under General Stuart immediately after the fall of Poona to the north-west frontier of Mysore, and the Nizám's contingent of 8,000 or 9,000 men having advanced under Colonel Stevenson from Hyderabad, Major-General Wellesley * was appointed to command a detachment of General Stuart's army, and directed to operate against Holkar. His troops consisted of the 19th Light Dragoons and two regiments of Native cavalry, the 74th Regiment, the Scottish Brigade, and six Native battalions, making, with artillery, 10,617 men. He was exceedingly anxious to have his own beloved 33rd also, but it was not found possible to gratify his wish.

General Wellesley marches against Holkar. Marching from Hurryhur on 9th March, 1803, General Wellesley entered Marhattá territory on the 12th, and formed a junction at Aklooss on 15th April with the Hyderabad contingent, of which Colonel Stevenson had assumed the command. This increased the invading army to 19,000, a force which Wellesley foresaw could not be provisioned if kept together. Holkar, moreover, having consumed all the grain and forage within 150 miles of Poona, was retiring to the north, leaving a garrison of 1500 in the Peshwá's capital.

* Colonel the Hon. Arthur Wellesley had been promoted to staff rank on 29th April, 1802.

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He was known to have reached Chandore, about 130 miles north of Poona, and obviously was meditating a descent on the Deccan. Wellesley, therefore, continuing his own advance on Poona, detached Stevenson's force to cover the Nizám's frontier. ANN. 1803.

Capture of Poona by the British.

News coming to hand that Amrut Rao, Holkar's governor in Poona, was about to burn that city and evacuate it, Wellesley resolved to be beforehand with him. Taking the cavalry only, he dashed forward on the morning of 19th April through the Little Boorghát pass, and, traversing sixty miles of very difficult country in thirty-four hours, arrived before Poona on the 20th in time to save it from destruction. Amrut Rao beat a hasty retreat, and Wellesley's cavalry rode into the capital without striking a blow. The Peshwá was brought back from Bassein, and on 13th May British guns thundered out to his people the announcement that he was seated once more on the throne of Sattarah.

Sindhia's attitude.

The position was now this—the Peshwá, under the treaty of Bassein, was the ally of the East India Company; Sindhia also, as the Peshwá's ally against Holkar, might have been reckoned constructively as in alliance with the Company, but the Peshwá was no sooner free from Sindhia's control than he ceased to be the object of his friendly interest—became, indeed, the object of his unmitigated dislike. Sindhia, therefore, began overtures of peace with Holkar, and, associating himself with the Rájá of Berar, took up in force a position threatening the Deccan.

On 26th June General Wellesley received commission to the chief command of the British forces in the Marhattá states, with extraordinary political powers. Averse, as usual, from hostilities except as a last resource, he was indefatigable in negociating with the native chiefs, hoping to induce them to resume friendly, or at least neutral, relations.*

Negociations with Sindhia.

To trace all the steps in the events which ultimately led to a rupture with Sindhia would be almost as tedious as it

* *Despatches*, i. 203–294.

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was Sindhia's policy to make the proceedings themselves. The chief features in the negociations were a demand by General Wellesley that Sindhia should withdraw his army from the position it occupied on the Nizám's frontier. Sindhia replied that he could only do so on the withdrawal of the British forces into their own territory. Wellesley's reply was made from his camp at Walkee on 6th August—

War declared against Sindhia and the Rájá of Berar.

"I offered you peace on terms of equality, and honourable to all parties: you have chosen war and are responsible for all consequences." *

On the same day he instructed the officer commanding the troops in Baroda to begin operations against Sindhia's fort at Baroach, † and on the 7th August issued a proclamation of war against Dowlut Rao Sindhia and the Rájá of Berar.‡

On the 8th August the rain which had lasted some weeks having cleared away, Wellesley moved forward to Ahmadnagar § with 1,731 cavalry and 7,000 infantry, besides artillery, pioneers, and 5,000 Indian horse from Mysore and Poona. Ahmadnagar was strongly fortified, and refused a summons to surrender. The *pettah*, a fortified suburb, was carried after a stubborn resistance; fire was opened on the morning of the 10th, and, on the evening of the 11th, the place surrendered, possession thereof, as covering the road to Poona, being considered of great importance by Wellesley. The loss of the attacking force amounted to no more than 22 killed (including four British officers) and 97 wounded.

Capture of Ahmadnagar.

On 2nd September Colonel Stevenson, operating independently with the Hyderabad force, stormed Jalnapur on

* *Despatches*, i. 287. In his translation of Brialmont, Mr. Gleig has not corrected that author's rendering of the last sentence, which he gives as—"you have chosen war and you shall undergo all its calamities;" a menace more dramatic, perhaps, than Wellesley's habitually cool language, but not the words he actually used.

† *Despatches*, i. 292.

‡ *Ibid.*, 299.

§ "Except Vellore, in the Carnatic, Ahmednuggur is the strongest country fort that I have seen" (*Ibid.*, i. 301).

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the Marhattá frontier, while Wellesley advancing from Ahmadnagar on 16th August, intended to reunite the forces. It was uncertain, as yet, whether Holkar was in the field against the British, as well as Sindhia and the Rájá of Berar. ANN. 1803.

Simultaneously with Wellesley's and Stevenson's invasion from the south-west, General Lake was advancing from Cawnpore with 14,000 men against the north-east frontier of the Marhattás. On 29th August he defeated Sindhia's forces under the French General Perron, who thereupon threw up his command and retired to France with the enormous wealth he had amassed during his service with the Marhattás. Another Frenchman, Bourquien, having succeeded to the command, he, too, was defeated by Lake near Delhi on 11th September.* General Lake's operations.

Wellesley effected his junction with Stevenson at Budnapur on 21st September, and, learning that the enemy occupied a position between Bokerdun and Jaffierabad, on the other side of the hills, he detached Stevenson once more on the 22nd to move by a pass to the east of these hills, while he himself marched round by the west. Arriving at Naulniah about 11 o'clock on the 23rd, Wellesley, who had to rely entirely on information collected by native *hircarrahs*, or messengers, was told that Sindhia and the Rájá of Berar had moved off with their cavalry, nearly 30,000 strong, leaving their infantry, about 20,000, to follow. The latter, he was informed, were still in camp about six miles distant, instead of twelve or fourteen miles as he had reckoned from his previous information. The mistake arose from confusion between the village of Bokerdun and the district of the same name.† The enemy's right, indeed, rested on the village of Bokerdun, but their front extended eastward about six miles to Assaye, which brought them within six miles of the British outposts.

* In consequence of this victory the Company restored Shah Alum to the throne of Delhi, where henceforward British influence remained paramount.

† *Despatches*. i. 391.

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Under these circumstances, Wellesley found it impossible, in presence of the whole Marhattá army, to await Stevenson's arrival for the concerted attack next day. He had to decide between an immediate and offensive movement with 7,500 men and 17 guns against an enemy numbering 50,000 with 128 guns, strongly posted, and a retreat to Naulniah, exposed to the whole of the Marhattá horse. Nor did this include all his disadvantage. His men had already marched twenty miles that morning, whereas the Marhattás had been lying in camp for several days.

It was one of those moments in which the renown of an individual is made or marred—the destiny of an empire shattered or confirmed.

The certainty of suffering severely from the enemy's cavalry if he attempted to retreat, and the necessity of abandoning all his baggage, decided him. Wellesley sent word to Stevenson, then distant about twelve miles, to come on with all speed, and resolved to attack at once.*

Battle of Assaye.

The Marhattá position was a very strong one. In front of it ran the river Kistna, rendered impassable to guns and carriages by its steep and rocky banks, except at two points. The enemy's rear was protected by another stream, the Juah, while the junction of these two rivers formed a good defence to his left flank. Nearly opposite that left flank, about four miles to the British right, lay the village of Peepulgaon, on the right bank of the Kistna. Wellesley could not see the river, and could not have it reconnoitred in presence of a large body of Marhattá horse on the hither side of it. The native guides assured him there was no ford, but he would not rest content till he had examined the place

* Lord Roberts (*Rise of Wellington*, p. 22) follows M. Brialmont in citing Wellesley as describing his attack as "a desperate *expedient*." This may be an appropriate expression, but it was not the phrase used by Wellesley. What he did say in his letter to Colonel (afterwards Sir Thomas Munro) was this: "I determined upon attack immediately. It was certainly a most desperate one, but our guns were not silenced" (*Suppl. Despatches*, iv. 211). There is a good deal of difference between a "desperate expedient" and a "desperate attack."

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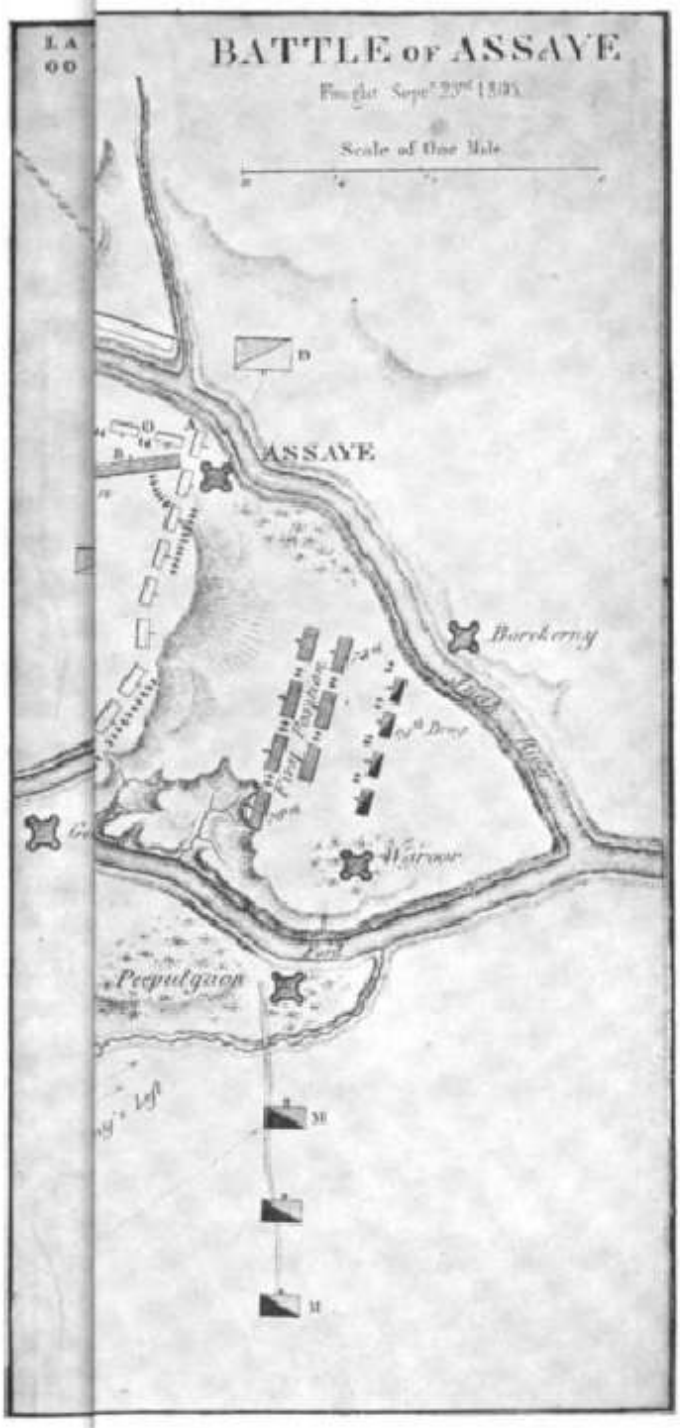

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himself. Taking the whole of his cavalry as an escort he rode forward to a position where, through his glass, he could see the far bank of the Kistna, and found that immediately opposite Peepulgaon there was another village. From this he argued that there must be some communication between the two villages, perhaps by boat, but more probably by a ford.* He made up his mind to risk it, and, in order to reach the hypothetical ford, began a flank march, parallel with the enemy's front, but with the river between the two armies. The 74th and 78th Highlanders and four Sepoy battalions led the way, the cavalry brought up the rear to protect the column from the enemy's horse on the near side of the stream. Luckily it was some time before the enemy perceived the movement of the infantry; still more luckily, he did not occupy the ford, as he might have done in overwhelming force. Instead of this, as soon as Sindhia perceived his right flank threatened, he changed front, bringing up his right to rest on the Kistna, and throwing back his left to the village of Assaye. This movement, which was executed with great steadiness and precision, was covered by a heavy fire of grape and chain shot. It was an anxious moment as the advance guard reached the water. ANN. 1803.

Was there a ford or was there none?

Hurrah! the Highlanders are halfway across, and no more than waist deep; some of them fall and are swept away, for the enemy's shot ploughs the water all around them; but the leading sections reach the further shore; the main body, as it lands, deploys and forms a line of attack right across the peninsula. The enemy, to meet them, withdraws his left, which causes Wellesley to alter his tactics; at about three o'clock he begins to manœuvre by his left against the Marhattás' right. By this time the British guns were nearly

* Referring to this incident in conversation with Lord Mahon, the Duke of Wellington observed: "That was common sense. When one is strongly intent on an object, common sense will usually direct one to the right means" (*Stanhope*, 49; *Croker*, i. 353).

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useless, most of the bullocks having been shot, so they were kept in rear of the attack. The whole force Wellesley was able to bring into action did not amount to 5,000 men. It advanced in three lines, the two infantry brigades leading, the cavalry covering the rear, the Mysore and Peshwá's horse protecting the left flank. After firing a couple of rounds, the 78th Highlanders and the Sepoys dashed forward and engaged the enemy with the bayonet, driving the Marhattás from their guns in the first line and scattering their infantry. Then they moved on to the second line of guns and captured these in like manner.

Perilous position of the British right.

At this moment, the officer commanding the pickets on the right, mistaking his orders, continued to advance against the village of Assaye, supported by the 74th Highlanders. This dislocated the whole British formation, causing a wide break between the right and left wings of the two foremost lines, while the advanced pickets and 74th were exposed to a destructive fire from guns posted in Assaye, and were charged by the cavalry attached to the enemy's infantry battalions. To save them, Wellesley brought up his cavalry, who, charging under Colonel Maxwell of the 19th Light Dragoons, managed to bring off the remnants of the attacking party; but in this affair the cavalry suffered heavily, Colonel Maxwell being among the slain. To silence the fire from Assaye, Wellesley threw forward the 78th against the corps round that village. A smart bayonet charge threw the Marhattás into confusion; they fled in panic across the nullah, the 19th Light Dragoons charging again and cutting down many fugitives.

At six o'clock the combined armies of Sindhia and the Rájá of Berar were in full retreat towards Burrampur, leaving the field in possession of the British.

This brilliant and most momentous victory was not won without a loss sadly disproportionate to the number of British troops engaged. Seventy-nine officers and 1,778 soldiers were killed and wounded, among the slain being 43 officers,

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nearly all having been struck by cannon shot. The blunder of the gallant fellow who led his pickets too near the guns at Assaye was the chief cause of this excessive proportion of casualties. In the 74th Highlanders, which was ordered to support this officer's pickets at a distance of 300 or 400 yards, every officer present, except Quartermaster James Grant, was either killed or wounded. One company of the pickets, consisting of one officer and fifty men, lost all but six rank and file. General Wellesley had one horse shot under him and another one piked. ANN. 1803.

The Marhattá loss was very severe. They left 1,200 dead on the field, besides 102 pieces of cannon and a great part of their camp equipage; but Wellesley's small force of cavalry had suffered too heavily to enable him to pursue the fugitives. Of the young General's behaviour under fire there remains the interesting testimony of his brigade-major, Lieutenant Colin Campbell, who was himself wounded and had two horses shot under him.

"The General was in the thick of the action the whole time, and had a horse killed under him. No man could have shown a better example to his troops than he did. I never saw a man so cool and collected as he was the whole time, though I can assure you, till our troops got orders to advance, the fate of the day seemed doubtful; and if the numerous cavalry of the enemy had done their duty, I hardly think it possible we should have succeeded."*

Colonel Stevenson, being led astray by his guides, did not arrive till the night of the 24th, when he set off to follow the enemy in their retreat to Berar.

Of Wellesley's tactics in this battle critics have been numerous and, as must be admitted, not unreasonable. Objection has been taken in the first place to his having separated from Colonel Stevenson's division when so near a superior force of the enemy. Wellesley's own defence

* *Suppl. Despatches*, iv. 186, note.

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Æt. 34. on that point is that the separation was necessary, because both corps could not have advanced through the same defile on the same day; and that it was advisable, because if one of these defiles had been left open, the enemy might have passed through it into the territory which it was the object of the campaign to defend. Of course, the most obvious reflection on the General's conduct arises from his having found himself in close proximity to a stationary enemy which he believed to be at a considerable distance, a surprise which could not have occurred with an efficient system of reconnoitring. But the enemy's horse was so numerous that no reconnoitring could be undertaken by an European officer without an army behind him; neither could Wellesley employ his own *hircarrahs*, who, as natives of the Carnatic, were as easily recognised as Europeans: he had to rely on natives hired in the enemy's own country, whose information naturally was far from trustworthy. No doubt, had such a situation arisen in the course of autumn manœuvres at home, the umpire must have pronounced the inferior force beaten, and badly beaten; but when a capable general in real war is entrapped in a dilemma, it sometimes happens that his genius and the enemy's unreadiness combine to force the hand of fate. By all the formal rules of war Wellesley, in making a flank march of four miles across the front of an immensely superior force, exposed to artillery fire and with cavalry threatening his rear—in then fording a difficult river and advancing across an exposed plateau in face of more than one hundred guns—lastly, in being compelled to call prematurely into action his only semblance of a reserve in order to rectify the mistake of one of his officers, and having been obliged to abandon his artillery—Wellesley, I say, fulfilled all the conditions necessary to ensure the doom of any ordinary general and of any ordinary troops. That they wrested the palm of victory under such tremendous hazards seems to show that neither commander nor commanded were of the common kind.

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Stevenson having continued to operate with success against the Marhattás, and having taken Burrampur and Assirghur, the chiefs began overtures for an armistice. Wellesley, preferring to deal with one at a time, agreed to treat with Sindhia, but declined to do so with the Rájá of Berar.* Sindhia, though he had lost all his guns and though his infantry was scattered, was still at the head of a powerful force of cavalry, which it was desirable to put out of the field before treating with the Rájá. Accordingly, on 23rd November, a suspension of hostilities was arranged between Wellesley and Sindhia's *vakeels*,† preliminary to a treaty of peace, one condition being that Sindhia should move his position forty miles to the east of Ellikpúr. Instead of carrying this out, Sindhia remained with his army in close proximity to the Rájá's camp, and Wellesley prepared to attack them both. ANN. 1803. Overtures for peace.

Although he had been long separated from Stevenson, sometimes at a distance of hundreds of miles, he had maintained constant communication with him by *dawk*, or foot-messengers, who, rattle in hand to scare wild beasts and with loins strictly girt, traversed enormous distances at the rate of five or six miles an hour and supplied a very trustworthy substitute for a regular post. On 27th November Wellesley, perceiving in the distance the dust raised by a body of troops, judged it to be Stevenson's division, and desired an officer near him to ride off and desire him to wait at the village of Huttee Andorah, where the two divisions might form a junction.

"But suppose," said the officer, "it should not be Colonel Stevenson?"

"Why then," replied Wellesley, "you are mounted on a d—d good horse, and you have eyes in your head: you must ride off as hard as you can." ‡

The Native officers on his staff expressed much surprise at their General's discernment.

* *Despatches*, ii. 73. † Envoys. ‡ *Stanhope*, 181.

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Æt. 34. "How," they asked, "can you tell Colonel Stevenson's dust from any other dust?" *

Wellesley had calculated exactly the time it ought to take Stevenson to fulfil his orders, and he knew he could rely on his man.

Battle of Argaum. The united British force, consisting of six regiments of cavalry, 4,000 irregular horse, and fourteen battalions of infantry—about 18,000 in all—marched twenty miles to Parterley, whence the enemy could be perceived about six miles distant, drawn up on the plain of Argaum. Their line extended for more than five miles, Sindhia's cavalry being on the right, the Rájá of Berar's infantry and guns in the centre, and a body of cavalry on the left. In front of the Marhattá position lay a plain, much intersected with water-courses; in their rear was the village of Argaum with gardens and enclosures.

It was late in the afternoon: his troops were exhausted by their long march and the intense heat: the enemy were six miles distant, yet Wellesley determined to attack them at once, and marched on in a single column. Arriving on the plain, he deployed his forces in two lines—the infantry in the first, the cavalry in the second line, supporting the right of the infantry. When the enemy's artillery opened, three battalions of Sepoys, who had behaved with the utmost steadiness and gallantry under far hotter fire at Assaye, broke and ran away. Wellesley himself galloped among them and succeeded in rallying them. "If I had not been there," he wrote afterwards, "I am convinced we should have lost the day." † As it was, much valuable time was wasted, but, the line having been reformed, the advance was resumed in good order. Sindhia's horse, charging the left of the British line, was repulsed in great disorder and fled, spreading confusion among the Marhattá forces, who broke and abandoned their position, leaving thirty-eight guns in the hands of the victors. Night was now falling, but the British and Native

* *Stanhope*, 182. † *Despatches*, i. 533.

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cavalry pursued for miles in the moonlight, capturing elephants, camels, and much baggage, and killing many fugitives. ANN. 1803.

On this day, when the Marhattá power was broken, the British troops were under arms from six in the morning till midnight. Their loss, considering the completeness of their success and the numerical superiority of the enemy, was surprisingly light, consisting of only 46 killed and 303 wounded and missing.

Siege and capture of Gawilghur.

Allowing a single day to rest his men and to write his despatches, Wellesley advanced on 1st December towards Gawilghur, an important and well-fortified stronghold of the Rájá of Berar. The heavy ordnance and stores, which were in Stevenson's division, had to be drawn by hand for thirty miles over mountains and through ravines, on roads constructed by the troops as they went along. "Colonel Stevenson's division," Wellesley reported to the Governor-General, "went through a series of laborious services, such as I never before witnessed, with the utmost cheerfulness and perseverance." *

Wellesley covered these operations with his division and the whole of the cavalry. Fire was opened on the defences of Gawilghur on 13th December: on the morning of the 15th, the breaches being pronounced practicable, a storming party was told off under Lieut.-Col. Kenny, while two other assaults were directed simultaneously against the southern and north-western gates. The garrison was numerous, but badly commanded; the British speedily overcame their resistance, and became masters of the place with very slight loss. In his general orders on that evening Wellesley assigned most of the credit to the troops under Colonel Stevenson, who bore the chief labours of the siege and furnished the storming party.

These repeated reverses, combined with the victorious progress of General Lake at Delhi and Agra and the occupation by Colonel Harcourt of the district of Cuttack belonging to

* *Despatches*, i. 551.

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ÆT. 34.

Peace concluded with Sindhia and the Rájá.

the Rájá of Berar, convinced the Marhattá leaders of the futility of further resistance, and before the close of the year Wellesley concluded treaties of "perpetual peace and friendship with both Sindhia and the Rájá." As strong, apparently, in diplomacy as in strategy, he obtained important concessions to indemnify the Company for the expenses of the war. Delhi, Agra, Broach, and Ahmadnagar, with territory yielding a yearly revenue of £3,000,000, passed into the possession of the British. "Your treaty," wrote the Governor-General to Wellesley, "is wise, honourable, and glorious, and I shall ratify it the instant a copy can be made." *

Dispersal of Marhattá brigands.

The break-up of the Marhattá forces was the cause of serious disturbance in various hill districts, whither many of the disbanded soldiery betook themselves and began a system of brigandage. Wellesley determined to disperse the worst of these bands, which was devastating the Soubah of the Deccan. Crossing the Godavery, therefore, with the 19th Light Dragoons, three Native regiments of cavalry, and a small force of infantry, by making an extraordinary forced march he came up with the brigands on 5th February, 1804, and cut them to pieces, capturing the whole of their guns and baggage. In after years Wellesley used to speak of this march as the most arduous he ever undertook. He calculated that between 6 a.m. on the 4th and noon on the 5th his infantry had marched sixty miles.

* *Despatches*, ii. 14. Writing to the Governor-General, Wellesley describes an amusing incident of the peace negociations:—

21st January, 1804.—"Malcolm writes from Scindiah's camp that at the first meeting Scindiah received him with great gravity, which he had intended to preserve throughout the visit. It rained violently, and an officer of the escort, Mr. Pepper, an Irishman (a nephew of old Bective's, by-the-by), sat under a flat part of the tent which received a great part of the rain. At length, it burst through the tent upon the head of Mr. Pepper, who was concealed by the torrent that fell, and was discovered after some time by an 'Oh Jasus!' and an hideous yell. Scindiah laughed violently, as did all the others present; and the gravity and dignity of the durbar degenerated into a Malcolm riot—after which they all parted on the best of terms" (*Despatches*, ii. 62).

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The operations against the Marhattás having been brought to a successful close, Wellesley returned to Poona, and thence proceeded to Bombay. It appears from his correspondence that he felt dissatisfied at the degree of recognition his services had received from the Home Government and the Commander-in-chief, the Duke of York. His appointment on the staff, made eighteen months previously, had not been confirmed, and he was apprehensive that another officer might be appointed over his head. So strong was his feeling on this subject that he asked General Lake's permission to return to Europe, proposing to resign the military and political appointments he held from the Governor-General.

ANN. 1804.

General Wellesley is discontented.

It may be observed here, once for all, that during his service in India Wellesley frequently betrayed in his letters undue impatience with the authorities and ingratitude for what had been, even for those days, singularly rapid promotion and singularly happy opportunities of distinguishing himself. To have obtained the command of his regiment at four-and-twenty, to have been appointed military and civil Governor of Mysore at thirty, to have been promoted to major-general at thirty-three—these seem to be points in an enviably propitious career, and undoubtedly did create much jealousy in the minds of officers who had less family influence at their back. Although in writing to the Governor-General he often expressed his gratitude for the favour shown by him, it would have been agreeable had there been less grumbling in the rest of his correspondence. He complains in one letter that he has "never received anything but injury from the Court of Directors," yet in another he acknowledges that, between prize-money and the sum (£4,000) awarded him by the Court in recognition of his services, he has quite enough to render him "independent of all office or employment."

However much one might wish that some passages in these letters had been differently expressed (and which of us ever have felt very sympathetic with the grievances of others?) we owe it to Wellesley's habitual frankness that they have

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Æt. 35.

been allowed to remain as they were written. His correspondence with Colonel Gurwood, preserved at Apsley House, shows how scrupulous he was to allow no alterations in them, except the omission of a passage here and there which might wound the susceptibilities of persons, European or Native, still living when the papers were being prepared for publication, and of the names of such officers and soldiers who fell into disgrace in his many campaigns, and of those regiments which he had occasion to reprimand. Taken as a whole, this correspondence during Wellesley's eight years of Indian service is no whit inferior in style and scope to that of his later years. His insight into native character and the wants of the people—his conception of the right policy to pursue alike in the interests of the British power and the native rulers—his reluctance to appeal to arms when the end could be attained by peaceful means—above all, his resolute adherence to the principles of honour and his contempt for indirect emolument—appear as clearly in these papers as his solicitude for the welfare of his troops and minute attention to organisation of transports, supplies, and equipment. As a literary work, the whole series of the despatches from 1794 down to 1832,* filling the greater part of 15,000 large octavo pages, closely printed, forms one of the most remarkable achievements from a single hand that ever were penned. There is hardly an ambiguous sentence in the whole of it; clearness is never risked by economy of words—in fact, the sense is sometimes amplified by expressions which might be judged redundant. When one reflects upon the variety of agitating and fatiguing circumstances under which the military part of the correspondence was conducted, it is impossible not to marvel at the cool head and iron frame which enabled the writer to set them at defiance.† The

The Wellington despatches.

* The correspondence from 1832 to the close of his life has not been printed, but I have had the privilege of inspecting it at Apsley House.

† When Colonel Gurwood's edition of Wellesley's Indian despatches was published thirty years later, the author of them read them with much interest,

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letters abound in maxims and aphorisms which, had they occurred in anything but official documents, had surely long ago been gleaned by those industrious persons who compile birthday-books. On the completion of the twelfth volume of the Despatches the Duke wrote to Colonel Gurwood— ANN. 1804.

6th November, 1838.—"You have brought before the publick a work which must be useful to statesmen and soldiers, as containing the true details of important political and military operations of many years' duration. I did not believe it possible that a correspondence which I preserved at first solely as memoranda and for reference, and afterwards from idleness and the desire to avoid the trouble of looking over the papers to see what might be destroyed, could ever be turned to a purpose so useful to our profession and the publick interests." *

It must not be understood that the feelings of resentment or discontent which found expression in some of these letters had the slightest effect in diminishing Wellesley's energy in carrying out his own work and seconding the work of others. Whatever jealousy his good fortune may have awakened in certain officers less lucky than himself, there is abundant evidence of the confidence Wellesley secured both from his superiors and from those under his command. Many attempts have been made to define genius; it has no more constant characteristic than readiness to turn opportunity to good account. Personal interest was as much recognised in those days as the chief motor in military promotion, as seniority and merit are now. What would now be denounced as jobbery was then perfectly fair and above-board. It often placed men in positions for which they were deplorably—disgracefully unfit: Wellesley was an instance of a man

and expressed his surprise to find them so good—"as good as I could write now. They show the same attention to details—to the pursuit of all the means, however small, that could promote success." When Lord Mahon expressed his astonishment that Wellesley could write so lucidly and at such length in the midst of active operations, he said, "My rule always was to do the business of the day in the day" (*Stanhope*, 49, 57, 70).

* *Apsley House MSS.*

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Æt. 35. favoured by fortune and able to turn her favours to the service of his country. The College of Heralds deserve no little credit for having so aptly epitomised his career in the motto which they assigned to him—*Virtutis fortuna comes*—"Fortune the comrade of Valour." *

Wellesley's friendship with Sir John Malcolm.

Injustice, however, would be done to a wise and brave man if no mention were made of Colonel John Malcolm,† with whom Wellesley formed a close friendship and corresponded more intimately than with any one else during his Indian service, or, indeed, for long afterwards. Malcolm undoubtedly possessed a strong influence for good over Wellesley. In urging him in 1804 to give up his resolution to return to England he founded his arguments on the subordination of private to public interests.

". . . I know circumstances might arise which would make your situation, in the subordinate part it might fall to your share to act, unpleasant; but a sense of duty and zeal for the public service would prevent such feelings having weight. . . . At all events we should not decline a station in which we are positive we can do a great deal of good, from a fear of not having it in our power to do all the good we might wish or intend." ‡

Malcolm perceived, as clearly as we can now perceive in reading these letters, the share which personal ambition had in directing Wellesley in his choice of employment, however little it interfered with the discharge of duty undertaken.

"I acknowledge," Wellesley replied to the letter above quoted, "that I don't exactly see the necessity that I should stay several years in India in order to settle affairs which, if I had been permitted, I should have settled long ago. . . . I look to England, and I conceive that my views in life will be advanced by returning there. I don't conceive that any man has a right to

* It is a paraphrase, not specially elegant, of Cicero's apostrophe (Ep. x. 3)—"Omnia summa consecutus es, virtute duce, comite fortunâ."

† Afterwards Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B.

‡ Kaye's *Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm*, i. 290.

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call upon me to remain in a subordinate position in this country, contrary to my inclination, only because it will suit his views, and will forward objects for which he has been labouring. . . . If they are duties which require extraordinary qualifications in the person who is to perform them, let General Lake, or the Commander-in-chief at Fort George, or anybody else, be charged with them. But surely it is not exactly reasonable to expect that I should remain in a subordinate position, contrary to my inclination, only to involve myself in fresh troubles and difficulties." * ANN. 1804.

Wellesley coupled his resignation and application for leave to retire to England with an assurance that they were subject to any help he might still give in co-operating with General Lake, or in carrying out the Governor-General's policy.† Wellesley resigns his appointment.

At the time this application was made, the Company was at peace with all the native powers, but circumstances soon arose which induced Wellesley to alter his purpose. Holkar, whose hatred of Sindhia would not permit him to assist that prince in his struggle with the British, no sooner saw him in alliance with them than he assumed the offensive. Colonel Monson, commanding 12,000 troops detached from General Lake's army, was attacked by Holkar's cavalry in the Mokundra pass. He began a retreat, which turned into a flight, until of the whole detachment scarcely one-tenth reached the gates of Agra alive. War with Holkar.

Wellesley recognised in Monson's calamity the neglect of those principles of campaigning which he never failed to observe, and was never weary of inculcating on his officers.

11*th September*, 1804.—"Monson's disasters are really the greatest and the most disgraceful to our military character of any that have ever occurred. The detachment had not two days' provisions: was cut off from its resources by many rivers, on which we had neither bridge nor boat; and all measures to supply the only fort (Rampoora) to which, in case of emergency,

* Kaye's *Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm*, p. 292.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, iv. 377.

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Æt. 35. he might have recourse, were omitted. To employ the detachment at all was an error; but the common modes of securing its safety have been omitted." *

Next day he writes of Monson's "retreat, defeats, disgraces, and disasters," as

"woful examples of the risk to be incurred by advancing too far without competent supplies, and of the danger of attempting to retreat before such an army as Holkar's is. He would have done much better to attack Holkar at once, and he would probably have put an end to the war." †

In Monson's fate he seems to have recognised what would have been his own had he attempted to retreat before Sindhia from Assaye.

Previous to this, on 23rd May, 1804, Wellesley had joined the army intended to operate against Holkar. But the task of crushing the last of the hostile Marhattás was entrusted to General Lake; the army of the Deccan was broken up. On 24th June Wellesley gave up his military and political offices in that principality and returned to Calcutta. There he was occupied for some months in military deliberations, till, on 9th November, he resumed his functions as administrator at Seringapatam.

Wellesley resumes command in Mysore.

During the winter Wellesley suffered from attacks of fever, and, seeing peace re-established on all the Company's frontiers, he renewed his application to be permitted to return home. The last few months of his residence in India was one long series of fêtes and presentations. The inhabitants, British and Native, civilian and military, of Bombay, Madras, Seringapatam, Calcutta, and the officers of his division, vied with each other in paying honour and making gifts to the hero of Assaye. The thanks of the King and Parliament for his services in command of the army of the Deccan were published by the Governor-General in general orders; but

* *Suppl. Despatches*, iv. 465. † *Ibid.*, 466.

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of all these tokens of respect, perhaps none touched the heart of the General so nearly as one from his own regiment, the 33rd, in which, since he had resigned command thereof, he had never ceased to take a special interest. ANN. 1805.

One more honour accorded him deserves special mention. The Order of the Bath at that time was restricted to twenty-four knights. King George, as a special mark of grace, directed that General Wellesley should be invested as an extra knight-companion—a distinction, as Lord Roberts has observed, higher than the Grand Cross carries at the present day.* Wellesley receives knighthood.

Sir Arthur Wellesley embarked for England in H.M.S. *Trident*, in March, 1805. Writing to Lord Wellesley from St. Helena on 3rd July, he says that the voyage and a short residence have done much to restore his health. "The island is beautiful, and the climate apparently the most healthy I have ever lived in." Possibly, after ten eventful years had passed, the impression he retained of this place may have had some little effect in fixing the last abode of Napoleon.

To form an estimate of the character and extent of Sir Arthur Wellesley's influence on British power in India it is necessary to look further than upon his military achievements. Brilliant as these were, and great as were the reforms which he instituted in the organisation of armies in the field, they are not more remarkable than the power he exerted in directing the policy of the Governor-General. Marquess Wellesley was an able man, with lofty and perhaps ambitious views of government; but Sir Arthur was the stronger, and, while in complete harmony with the Governor-General in his resolution to put down corruption and maintain honourable relations with Native governments, it is easy to trace through their correspondence how greatly the elder was guided in his actions by the opinion and advice of the younger brother. Between them, the change effected on Summary of his work in India.

* *Rise of Wellington*, p. 33.

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ÆT. 35. British India was enormous and durable. French influence, supreme at the courts of Seringapatam, Hyderabad, Delhi, Agra, and Poona, was utterly effaced; the Hindu dynasty was re-established in Mysore; the Nizám, the Peshwá, Sindhia, Holkar, and the Rájá of Berar were brought into alliance with the British, while the due maintenance of their authority was scrupulously provided for: the territory and revenue of the East India Company was immensely increased. Yet of all the changes effected by the brothers Wellesley, none was so vital—so valuable to British ascendency in India—as the end which, between them, they put to the old system of private peculation and corruption. The administrative body became for the first time what it had long been in name—the *Honourable* East India Company—and military officers learnt to look with as great horror upon underhand transactions with natives as their training as gentlemen made them regard it among themselves.

Wellesley's military services in India have suffered much eclipse from his infrequent campaigns nearer home, but he often referred to his experience in the East in conversation with friends in later life.

"In India," he told Lord de Ros, "we always marched 'by the wheel.'* The men who had charge of these wheels attained such extraordinary correctness of judging distance that they could be depended upon almost as completely without the wheel as with it. The soldiers were in messes of six or eight; each mess had its own native cook and a bullock which carried the men's knapsacks and their cooking materials, etc. The native soldiers, however, at that time carried their knapsacks on their backs, but I believe they now no longer do so. An army in good order in India would march very near three miles an hour. Everything depended on finding halting stations at convenient distances, 16 or 18 miles, where there was water. Generally the villages were by the bank of what in winter was a river, but in summer was to all outward appearance perfectly dry, and a mere

* For measuring distance.

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bed of sand. The water, however, though unseen, was always flowing at a depth of from one to three feet below this bed of sand. Scouts were always sent forward to look for these dry rivers, and on the arrival of the army a great number of small wells were excavated the first thing. A few days afterwards the sand would blow into these holes, and after a short time no vestige of wells or excavations would remain." * ANN. 1805.

* *De Ros MS.*

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CHAPTER IV.

THE COPENHAGEN CAMPAIGN—FIRST EXPEDITION TO THE PENINSULA.

1805–1808.

1805. Sir Arthur Wellesley's one interview with Nelson.
He takes command of a brigade at Hastings.
October . . . . Receives the colonelcy of the 33rd Regiment.
April 10, 1806. Marries the Hon. Catherine Pakenham.
„ 12 . . . Elected member for Rye.
Work in Parliament.
Mar. 25, 1807. Fall of "All the Talents" Ministry.
Sir Arthur becomes Irish Secretary.
Disturbed condition of Ireland.
Expedition to Copenhagen.
July . . . . . Sir Arthur Wellesley receives command of a division.
Siege of Copenhagen.
August 29 . . Battle of Roskilde.
September 2 . Bombardment of Copenhagen.
„ 5 . Its capitulation.
October 1 . . . Sir Arthur resumes duty as Irish Secretary.
Feb. 1, 1808. Receives the thanks of Parliament.
Wellesley is urged to return to India.
Scheme for assisting the Spanish revolutionaries in South America.
Unsatisfactory state of the British army.
New relations with Spain.
Napoleon's designs upon that country and on Portugal.
March . . . . . Abdication of Charles IV. of Spain.
April 25 . . . Sir Arthur Wellesley promoted to Lieut.-General.
May 5 . . . . . Napoleon abolishes the Bourbon dynasty in Spain.
Resistance of the Spanish people.
Joseph Buonaparte made King of Spain.
Insurrection in the Provinces.
June . . . . . Sir Arthur Wellesley appointed to command an expedition to the Peninsula.
Interesting conversation with J. W. Croker.
July 20 . . . . Sir A. Wellesley arrives at Coruña.
Ferocious character of the war.

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ARRIVING in England after an absence of nine years, Sir Arthur Wellesley had frequent interviews with Mr. Pitt, Lord Castlereagh and other ministers, touching the affairs of India, and especially regarding the results of Lord Wellesley's policy as Governor-General. Pitt sought Sir Arthur's advice on affairs nearer home than India. ANN. 1805.

"I was consulted several times on expeditions to be undertaken; once in particular, when they wanted to make a treaty with the King of Prussia to raise a body of troops to fall upon the rear of Buonaparte. They fancied it could be done in a moment, but I knew better. I knew as much of war then as I do now, and I was aware that the King of Prussia could not have his troops raised and equipped and on the Danube in less than three months, and I was right. In the meantime Napoleon won the battle of Austerlitz." *

Lord Wellesley was then on his way home, having resigned his appointment; the Court of Directors were greatly agitated at the prospect of future wars arising out of the system, strongly advocated by Sir Arthur and adopted by his brother, of re-establishing the native princes after they had been defeated, and encouraging them to maintain strong armies. This, feared the directors, would lead to further wars and increased expenses; and there was a strong party in Parliament prepared to attack in the most vehement way Lord Wellesley's administration, especially in regard to the Marhattá war.

Of all the scenes which are cherished by the imagination of a later generation—a scene, surely, worthy of being made the subject of a great historic picture †—none is more interesting Arthur Wellesley's interview with Nelson.

* *Salisbury MSS.*, 1837.

† It has been painted by J. P. Knight, and reproduced in Captain Mahan's *Life of Nelson* (vol. ii. p. 320), but the disposition of the figures is far from felicitous, the splendour of the curtains and furniture strangely at variance with that dinginess so characteristic of the waiting-rooms in our public departments. The very poorness of the actual setting should, in the hands of an artist worthy of the subject, serve to enhance the splendour of the group.

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ÆT. 36. than that presented by the only meeting of Arthur Wellesley and Horatio Nelson, which took place shortly after the soldier's return from India. It cannot be better described than in his own words.

"I went to the Colonial Office in Downing Street, and there I was shown into the little waiting-room on the right hand, where I found, also waiting to see the Secretary of State, a gentleman, whom, from his likeness to his pictures and the loss of an arm, I immediately recognised as Lord Nelson. He could not know who I was, but he entered at once into conversation with me, if I can call it conversation, for it was almost all on his side and all about himself, and in really a style so vain and so silly as to surprise and almost disgust me. I suppose something that I happened to say may have made him guess that I was *somebody*, and he went out of the room for a moment, I have no doubt to ask the office-keeper who I was, for when he came back he was altogether a different man, both in manner and matter. All that I had thought a charlatan style had vanished, and he talked of the state of this country, and of the aspect and probability of affairs on the Continent with a good sense, and a knowledge of subjects at home and abroad that surprised me . . . in fact he talked like an officer and a statesman. The Secretary of State kept us long waiting, and certainly, for the last half or three-quarters of an hour, I don't know that I ever had a conversation that interested me more. Now, if the Secretary of State had been punctual and admitted Lord Nelson in the first quarter of an hour, I should have had the same impression of a light and trivial character that other people have had." *

Indian affairs were soon to be driven out of Sir Arthur's thoughts. War had been resumed between Great Britain and France, and in November he was appointed to command a brigade in Lord Cathcart's expedition to Hanover. But scarcely had this army landed in the Weser when the European coalition was broken up by Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz, and the troops were recalled to England, to be distributed

* *Croker*, ii. 233.

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ANN. 1806.

at various places along the coast. Wellesley's brigade was stationed at Hastings, where an acquaintance one day expressed his surprise that, after commanding armies of 40,000 men in the field, and receiving the thanks of Parliament for his victories, Wellesley should condescend to such a subordinate post. His reply was calculated to console many an Indian officer, who, returning home, has found himself in a position of far inferior dignity to what he occupied in the East.

Wellesley commands a brigade at Hastings.

"I am *nim muk wallah*," said Wellesley, "as we say in the East. I have eaten of the King's salt, and therefore I conceive it to be my duty to serve with zeal and cheerfulness, when and wherever the King or his Government may think fit to employ me." *

At the same time, though he was too proud or too loyal to allow a comparative stranger to perceive his discontent, in writing privately to his brother he complained roundly of his ill treatment in not receiving the colonelcy of a regiment.† This lucrative honour, however, was not long delayed. Lord Cornwallis, who had gone out to India as Governor-General in succession to Lord Wellesley, died there on 5th October, 1805, and the colonelcy of the 33rd Regiment which he had held was bestowed most appropriately on Sir Arthur. On 23rd January, 1806, William Pitt died, and the coalition known as the Ministry of All the Talents entered upon office with Fox as Prime Minister. Wellesley was elected member for Rye on 12th April in that year.

Receives colonelcy of 33rd Regiment.

Is elected member for Rye.

Of even greater personal moment to himself was an event which took place two days earlier, requiring, as the election for Rye did *not*, his personal attendance. It will be remembered that when, twelve years previously, Arthur Wellesley, or Wesley, as he then wrote himself, left Dublin for active service in the Netherlands, he was a disappointed lover. Not a line, not even a word or reference in all his correspondence during the interval, has remained to throw light

* *Despatches*, ii. 616, note. † *Suppl. Despatches*, iv. 540.

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Æt. 36.

upon the state of his feelings, or whether he cherished either hope or desire of claiming Catherine Pakenham as his bride. It is believed that they never corresponded while in different hemispheres, but when Wellesley went to spend his leave at Cheltenham, he met that amiable busybody Lady Olivia Sparrow, who twitted him with heartlessness to her bosom friend "Kitty Pakenham," and assured him that his lady-love had never changed.

"What!" exclaimed Wellesley, "does she still remember me? Do you think I ought to renew my offer? I'm ready to do it."

In consequence, he wrote at once to Miss Pakenham, renewing his proposal of marriage. She replied that, as it was so long since they had met, he had better come over and see her before committing himself, lest he should find her aged and altered.* Sir Arthur replied that *minds*, at all events, did not change with years; he hastened over to Ireland, and they were married in Lady Longford's drawing-room in Dublin on Friday, 10th April.

Marriage of Sir Arthur to the Hon. Catherine Pakenham.

There are many allusions in Maria Edgeworth's letters at the time to this marriage, which she describes as "one of those tales of real life in which the romance is far superior to the generality of fictions." "Sir Arthur," she writes to her stepmother, "is handsome, very brown, quite bald,† and a hooked nose," and she adds that they all called him "the great Sir Arthur." For Kitty Pakenham, as she called her, Maria had a warm affection, which lasted through life, and she has left abundant testimony to her charms. Writing to Mrs. Sneyd, in 1811, about a portrait, she says: "Lady Wellington is not like: it is absurd to draw Lady Wellington's *face*; it is all countenance."

* There is no foundation for the legend that she had been disfigured by smallpox, as one biographer after another has stated. To the end of her days the Duchess of Wellington's complexion remained fresh and delicate.

† Miss Edgeworth's eyes must have deceived her. The Duke of Wellington retained a good head of hair till the very end of his days.

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CATHERINE, 1ST DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON.
(*From a Crayon Drawing at Apsley House.*)

[*Vol. i. p.* 78.

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There was a profound pathos in this union. The lady with whom Wellesley stood before the altar in 1806 was less different in appearance from the girlish beauty of the Viceregal Court than the bronzed, war-worn, ambitious commander from the impressionable, pleasure-loving aide-de-camp who had lost his heart under the influence of her bright eyes and soft cheeks twelve years before. His head was now filled with far other schemes than matrimony and domestic bliss: one has not to look far for instances of faith broken under similar circumstances, and great men will never be without eager apologists for what, in lesser men, is accounted dishonourable. In this regard—in the respect for plighted troth—surely no more complete contrast to Wellesley's conduct could be found than in that great Emperor, against whom, for many years to come, his whole energy was to be matched. ANN. 1806.

As the event proved, Kitty Pakenham, though a sweet creature in the esteem of her friends, proved scarcely a suitable match for England's greatest commander.

Wellesley's sole object in entering the House of Commons, which he did on the invitation of Lord Grenville, and according to the advice of Lord Castlereagh, was the defence of his brother's administration in India, especially in regard to the Marhattá war.* No sooner was the new Parliament assembled than the long-threatened storm broke. Mr. Paull, the ambitious son of a Perth tailor, and educated in the office of an Edinburgh writer, had spent some years in India as a trader. He had been expelled from the dominion of Oude by the Nawab, reinstated by the influence of Lord Wellesley, hospitably entertained at the Governor-General's house, and finally, returning to England with a large fortune, became a member of Parliament in order to effect the impeachment of his benefactor. On 22nd April, 1806, he carried a motion preferring charges "for high crimes and misdemeanours against Richard Colley, Marquess Wellesley." This motion Sir Arthur's parliamentary work.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, v. p. iii., xiii. p. 285.

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Æt. 37. stood on the paper for months; Wellesley repeatedly pressed that it should be brought to a decision, but, on one pretext or another, it was postponed. Paull's intimate knowledge of Indian affairs, and his fluency in debate, enabled him to carry a section of the House with him, and he cherished hopes of enlisting the sympathy of the Prince of Wales, in what constituted an attack upon the Government and the Court party. The proud Whigs, however, did not care to fall in behind such a plebeian leader; Paull renewed his onslaught from time to time, until, on 14th April, 1808, maddened by losses at play which he could not liquidate, he committed suicide. The charges were renewed by Lord Folkestone, when Lord Wellesley's reputation was vindicated on a division by 182 votes to 31.

Roman Catholic disabilities.

Meanwhile, Fox died in the same year as his great rival, and the Cabinet became embroiled with the King in connection with proposals for the removal of certain disabilities from Roman Catholics. At that time Roman Catholics were prohibited by law from holding commissions in his Majesty's land or sea forces. It was to some extent an imaginary grievance, because the same statutory disability applied to all dissenters from the Church of England. Wellesley notes in an official memorandum "that it is notorious that no officer of the army or navy had been required for many years to take any oath, or to qualify in any manner; that it is equally notorious that there are many Roman Catholic officers in the King's service, and that I know four, the sons of one Irish Roman Catholic gentleman." Nevertheless, it was proposed to redress matters by the insertion of a new clause in the Mutiny Act. The King, when this came to his ears, declared he would never consent to such a reform, and the obnoxious clause was withdrawn. But the conflict was rekindled by Lord Howick,* who brought in a bill to effect the same purpose, which secured the approval of the majority of the Cabinet. The King rebuked his ministers, who replied that

* Afterwards Earl Grey.

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they could not "give assurances which would impose upon them a restraint incompatible with the faithful discharge of the duty which they owe to your Majesty." The controversy waxed warm, and on 25th March, the Ministry of all the Talents resigned. A new Cabinet was formed by the Duke of Portland, Castlereagh going to the War Office, and George Canning to the Foreign Office. The Duke of Richmond was sent to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, and Sir Arthur Wellesley took office for the first time as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. His brother Henry also joined the Ministry as one of the Secretaries to the Treasury.

ANN. 1807.

Fall of the Ministry of "All the Talents."

Sir Arthur becomes Irish Secretary.

Sir Arthur made no secret of his dislike to the office to which he was appointed. He had resolved, on returning to England, to have nothing to do with politics; but, having entered Parliament for the purpose of defending his brother, he did not consider it prudent to refuse a duty which conferred on him the standing and influence of a Privy Councillor, and he accepted the post on condition that it would not interfere with his professional prospects as a soldier.*

In the mean time, for some reason not apparent in his correspondence, Wellesley had ceased to be member for Rye, and on 20th January, 1807, he was elected to represent Mitchell, or Midsall. At the General Election he was again in search of a seat, and the manner in which he found one is described in the following curious way in one of his letters to Mr. Charles Long, Paymaster-General:—

Dublin Castle, 17th May, 1807.—"I heard from Lord Castlereagh respecting the return of Mr. Quintin Dick, and I have settled that he shall be returned for Cashell. Justice Day had, as usual, opened a negociation in England for the sale of Tralee, having before agreed with the Government here that we should have the borough; Lord Castlereagh discovered that Dick was to be the purchaser, and recommended that he should

* Letter to Marquess of Buckingham: *Suppl. Despatches*, xiii. 285.

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Æt. 38. be the member for any place rather than Tralee. I have, therefore, put him in for Cashell; and as Henry desired that either he or I might be returned for any of the Irish seats, the elections for which should be on an early day, I have directed Justice Day to return me for Tralee, and I shall desire Hardwicke to return Henry for Athlone. . . . Our elections go on well. We shall have about three-quarters of the Irish members."

Disturbed condition of Ireland.

The Lord Lieutenant and his Chief Secretary took up their duties in Dublin at a time when Ireland was in one of her periodical fever fits. The rebellions of 1798 and 1803 had left the people in a very restless and resentful temper; the hopes of religious equality which Pitt had encouraged, to smooth the way for the legislative union in 1800, had been frostbitten by the King's refusal to entertain any proposal for the removal of disabilities; Napoleon's victorious progress on the Continent had fanned the ideas of the disaffected into renewed activity, and it was essential to the Ministry that, in the General Election which was at hand, the Loyalist party should be kept in good humour. To this end, the administration of patronage, of which there was an immense amount in the Viceregal Office, became a subject of prime importance;* Wellesley's correspondence, therefore, teems with applications for and disposal of innumerable offices of every degree of value and dignity, from a bishopric to a customs boatman, and from a Knight of St. Patrick's riband to a militia ensigncy. There are, besides, the usual informations laid by spies about secret conspiracies, and many anxious deliberations about the distribution of troops and the general military system in Ireland. Much also relates to plans for securing the return of Government candidates in a majority of the Irish seats. Very frank is the language in which certain influential persons are requested to bring

* Wellesley does not mince matters in this regard. After the elections were decided he wrote to the Duke of Richmond on 6th July: "We must keep our majority in Parliament, and, with such a minority as there is against us, that can only be done by a good use of the patronage of the Government."

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their influence to bear on certain others who have seats at their disposal, and very cold are the calculations on which an estimate of the result is based. ANN. 1807.

6th May, 1807.—"I have seen Roden this day about his borough," writes Sir Arthur to his brother Henry, the Patronage Secretary. "It is engaged for one more session to Lord Stair, under an old sale for years, and he must return Lord Stair's friend unless Lord Stair should consent to sell his interest in the borough for the session which remains, upon which subject he has written to him. Robinson has the return for Carlow, and Canning that for Sligo, and we don't know yet whether Mr. Handcock will return himself or give us the return. Portarlington was sold at the late general election for a term of years, as I understand, so that we have the returns of Tralee, Cashell and Enniskillen." *

Strange work this for the head and hand which for years had been matched against the statecraft and strategy of Tipú and the Marhattá princes; but Wellesley went into it as thoroughly and minutely as into any duty he ever undertook. More congenial must have been the task of complying with Lord Hawkesbury's† request for a report on the military defences of Ireland in the event of a French invasion and a corresponding rising on the part of the disaffected Irish. This he fulfilled in an elaborate statement dated 7th May, 1807, recommending the establishment of a naval station in Bantry Bay, and the fortification, not of the coast, as was contemplated by some authorities, but, most characteristically, of inland stations as magazines and stores, situated on the lines of defence most suitable for resisting an invading army supported by an insurrectionary populace.

"I really consider a measure of this kind to be indispensable: I am convinced that unless we should adopt it, Great Britain will lose her dominion in Ireland as soon as the French are

* *Civil Despatches, Ireland*, 28.

† Home Secretary, afterwards Earl of Liverpool and Prime Minister.

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Æt. 38. enabled to attack us in such numbers as to employ a large proportion of our regular force."

The following passage shows how imminent and real had been the danger if Napoleon ever had been able to carry out the oft-mooted project of an invasion of Ireland.

"I am positively convinced that no political measure which you could adopt would alter the temper of the people of this country. They are disaffected to the British Government; they don't feel the benefits of their situation; attempts to render it better either do not reach their minds, or they are represented to them as additional injuries: and, in fact, we have no strength here but our army." *

Wellesley, in short, took very much the same view of the position of the British in Ireland as he had expressed about their position in India—namely, that they were an alien power, depending on the sword for the maintenance of their dominion. No other view was possible, perhaps, for a calm observer at that stormy period of European politics. Much conciliatory legislation has been lavished on Ireland since that time: British statesmen cherish the hope that the benefits conferred have not failed to win the good-will of some, at least, of her people; and Wellesley himself lived to be convinced that, if the British Empire must indeed be held together by the sword, that part of her armament which is manned by Irishmen is not the weakest.

Expedition to Denmark.

Wellesley had not been many months at his office in Dublin Castle before he was summoned to other and more familiar work. Strange as it must seem to those accustomed to recent politics to witness the Irish Secretary bartering boroughs and appointing Government nominees to represent Irish constituencies, it is even more so to read of his accepting a command in an army ordered on foreign service. As the warhorse "smelleth the battle from afar, the noise of the captains and the shouting," so the stir of military

* *Civil Despatches, Ireland*, 28-36.

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preparation roused Wellesley from his desk in Dublin. As soon as the rumour reached his ears, he wrote to Lord Castlereagh, reminding him of the condition under which he had undertaken the Irish Secretaryship—namely, that it should not interfere with his profession, urging that a successor should be found for the office, in order to leave him free to press his claim to a command in the projected expedition. He received the command—a division in Lord Cathcart's army of 20,000 men—but he was not relieved of the Chief Secretaryship. In order, however, that the Government should not be deprived of a vote in the House he resigned his seat for Tralee, in a manner highly characteristic of the good old times.

ANN. 1807.

Wellesley receives command of a division

To James Trail, Esq.

"London, 11th July, 1807.

"I propose to vacate my seat for Tralee this day, and to move for a new writ for that borough; and I request you to desire Mr. Justice Day to have *Evan Foulkes, Esq., of Southampton Street, London*, returned for that borough. I request you also to desire Mr. Justice Day, Mr. Handcock, and Mr. Pennefather to draw upon Messrs. Drummond, Charing Cross, London, for £5,000 British cash, at ten days' sight. This is as good as cash, but it will be very convenient to us here if you can delay to give them these directions.

"Ever, my dear sir, yours most sincerely,

"ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

"*Evan Foulkes, Esq., of Southampton Street, London*, to be the member for Tralee."

And no doubt the £5,000 British cash would have smoothed Mr. Foulke's entry to the Imperial Legislature, but the arrangement does not seem to have been carried into effect.

The expedition to Denmark has been commonly denounced as one of the most inglorious developments of British foreign policy, without sufficient regard to the dangers against which Canning had to prepare. By the treaty of Tilsit, 7th July, 1807, Napoleon had reached the zenith of his power, and had gained over Alexander of Russia's assent to

The invasion of Denmark.

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Æt. 38. the destruction of the British empire. The strength of that empire, then as now, was its maritime supremacy; contemptible as she had been deemed hitherto on land, Great Britain could only be overcome by a powerful combination of fleets. The treaty of Tilsit contained several secret articles; among others, one by which Alexander undertook not to interfere if Napoleon should seize the excellent fleet of Denmark lying in the roads of Copenhagen. This design having come to Canning's knowledge by means of an eavesdropper, who had listened to the privy conference of the two Emperors, he resolved to anticipate it. The Danish fleet must by no means pass into French clutches. England, it is true, was at peace with Denmark, but in the presence of mortal peril, international etiquette must to the wall.

Lord Cathcart was commander-in-chief of the army of 27,000 destined for service in Denmark; the Irish Secretary and his old rival, Sir David Baird, each received command of a division. Embarking at Sheerness at the end of July in a fleet of twenty-seven sail of the line and numerous transports commanded by Admiral Gambier, the expedition arrived off Copenhagen on 4th August. No apprehensions disturbed the minds of the Danish Government, who believed themselves to be on the best of terms with that of King George, till, on 12th August, Lord Cathcart proceeded to execute his mission. He demanded that the whole of the Danish fleet and naval equipment should be delivered into the custody of Great Britain until such time as peace should be restored in Europe, when it was promised they should be restored to their rightful owners. The Crown Prince of Denmark indignantly refused to comply with this humiliating demand, and prepared to resist it against all the power of England.

The British troops, reinforced by the arrival of the Pomeranian Legion under General Linsingen, proceeded to disembark at Veldbeck in a scene of extreme confusion and mismanagement.

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"I never," wrote Captain Napier of the 43rd Regiment, "saw any fair in Ireland so confused as the landing; had the enemy opposed us, the *remains* of the army would have been on their way to England." ANN. 1807.

Siege of Copenhagen.

But the Danes were ill prepared for resistance. There were not above 5,000 regular troops in Zealand, and the blockading squadron prevented more arriving from the mainland. Probably the British might have marched straight into Copenhagen, but Lord Cathcart, having summoned the capital, decided on a regular siege. Delay and confusion continued; at the end of ten days one battery had been erected.

Battle of Roskilde.

Wellesley received orders to operate with his division and General Linsingen's Germans against the Danish General Castenskiold, who lay at Roskilde with 14,000 of all arms, chiefly militia. Linsingen was sent forward to turn the enemy's left, but when he failed to appear at the appointed time, Wellesley decided not to wait for him, and prepared to attack the Danish position in front. Forming his infantry—the 3rd, 52nd, 92nd, and five companies each of the 43rd and 95th Regiments *—into line with their left on the sea, and with two squadrons of cavalry on their right, Wellesley advanced in echelon of battalions from the left, covered by his artillery. The Danes made but a poor stand, being little more than peasants thrust hastily into uniform, and were driven into their entrenchments. Expelled thence by the 92nd under Colonel Napier, they fell back on the town, where they were routed with very heavy loss; six guns and 1,100 prisoners, including 60 officers, being taken. "Not a man," wrote Wellesley, "would have made his retreat if General Linsingen had carried into execution his part of the plan." The Germans, however, made up for their slowness in action by atrocious cruelty in pursuit and their activity

* The 43rd, 52nd, and 95th, with some Portuguese battalions, afterwards formed the famous Light Division in the Peninsula. The old 95th is now the Rifle Brigade, and at that time contained some Highland companies.

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Æt. 38. in plunder. Unarmed country people were mercilessly butchered; Captain Napier declared that "every British soldier shuddered at the cruelty." Writing to his mother he said—

"I can assure you that, from the General of the Germans down to the smallest drumboy in the legion, the earth never groaned with such a set of infamous murdering villains."

Lord Cathcart in the mean time having established his batteries, proceeded to summon the city. Wellesley was exceedingly averse from having recourse to a bombardment, and submitted to the Commander-in-chief a plan for the occupation of the island of Amager, commanding the approaches to Copenhagen from the east, whereby all supplies should be cut off, and the capital reduced to capitulate.* Other views, however, prevailed. People in London were impatient, and Lord Cathcart wished to make short work of it; the bombardment began on the evening of 2nd September. The Danes replied, but, having neglected to raze their suburbs and fell the trees, their fire was ineffective. On the 5th, overtures for capitulation began; an armistice of twenty-four hours was granted, and Sir Arthur Wellesley, with Sir Horne Popham and Lieut.-Colonel Murray, were appointed to arrange the terms of surrender.

Bombardment and capitulation of the capital.

Thus ended this inglorious, though successful campaign, on the policy or justice of which Wellesley does not seem to have expressed any opinion. Probably he reciprocated the sentiments of the Danish General Oxholm, who, writing in English to Wellesley to express his gratitude for his "human (*sic*) and generous conduct to me and all the officers prisoners," added, "it is a great pitty that political views should counteract the private feelings of individuals, but, as soldiers, our lot is to obey." †

Since leaving England, Wellesley had not been informed whether he had been superseded, as he had requested he

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 9. † *Ibid.*, vi. 12.

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might be, by the appointment of another Irish Secretary. Learning that he was still in office, and operations in Denmark being at an end, he applied to Lord Cathcart for leave to return, "for," said he, "there is much to do in Ireland. The *long nights* are approaching fast, and if I am to have any concern in the government of that country, it is desirable I should be there." On 1st October, 1807, he was back at his post, busy trying to satisfy the myriad office-seekers, and anxiously devising military measures against insurrection and invasion. At his own request, and on his representation that Ireland was very badly off for intelligent general officers, he received an appointment on the staff of the army in that country. At the same time he gave deep thought to the best means of conciliating the Irish people, and held the strong opinion, much less commonly entertained in those years than it is now, that "the great object of our policy in Ireland should be to endeavour to obliterate, as far as the law will allow us, the distinction between Protestants and Catholics, and that we ought to avoid anything which can induce either sect to recollect or believe that its interests are separate and distinct from those of the other."*

ANN. 1808.

Wellesley resumes his duties as Irish Secretary.

On 1st February, 1808, the Speaker, on behalf of the House of Commons, returned thanks to the General Officers, Members of the House, who had taken part in the Danish campaign, and particularly referred to Sir Arthur Wellesley as one "long since known to the paths of glory, whose genius and valour had already extended our fame and empire, whose sword has been the terror of our distant enemies, and will not now be drawn in vain to defend the seat of empire itself, and the throne of his King." Wellesley rose in his place and, on behalf of the officers and troops, returned thanks for the honour conferred by the resolution of the House.

Wellesley receives the thanks of Parliament.

At this time affairs in India were not in a satisfactory state. Discontent was general in the army, and mutinous

* *Civil Despatches, Ireland*, 185.

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Æt. 38.

Wellesley is urged to return to India.

symptoms were becoming common. The Directors of the East India Company had begun to realise their loss in parting with such a servant as Wellesley, and were clamouring for his return to India. Sir Arthur felt no inclination to return to the Indian service; much the reverse, indeed; nevertheless he assured Lord Castlereagh that he was "happy to aid the Government in any manner they pleased, and ready to set out for any part of the world at a moment's notice." Colonel Malcolm wrote with great urgency—

"You know me incapable of flattery; my opinion . . . is fixed beyond the power of being altered, that upon your appointment to be Governor and Commander-in-chief of Madras, the actual preservation of that part of our British Empire may in a great degree depend."

To this Wellesley replied somewhat coldly. He felt no doubt, he said, that, if sent to India, he could restore a right temper and spirit to the army, but—

"The fact is that men in power in England think very little of that country, and those who do think of it feel very little inclination that I should go there. Besides that, I have got pretty high up the tree since I came home, and those in power think that I cannot well be spared from objects nearer home. . . . I am employed in this country much in the same way that I was in India, that is to say, in everything." *

Proposal to assist the Spanish colonies in rebellion.

There was no exaggeration here. In addition to his service in Denmark, his duties at the Irish Office, on the Irish staff, and in Parliament, Sir Arthur was commissioned to confer with General Miranda, an emissary of the revolutionary party in the South American colonies. This soldier of fortune, although a brother of the French Republican General of the same name, was exceedingly anxious to enlist the assistance of Great Britain in throwing off the Spanish yoke, a proposal of which Wellesley, as a staunch Tory,

* *Suppl. Despatches*, xiii. 288.

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could not bring himself to approve. "I always had a horror," he said afterwards, "of revolutionising any country for a political object. I always said—if they rise of themselves, well and good, but do not stir them up; it is a fearful responsibility." * Nevertheless, though Wellesley could not approve of such a policy, he prepared full plans for such an expedition should the Government decide to embark on it. In a series of memoranda of extraordinary detail, extending from the autumn of 1806 to the summer of 1808, he not only specified the number of troops to be employed, the places where they should be landed, the character of the population among which they would have to operate, and the form of government to be set up after these colonies were conquered, but he drew up *in his own handwriting* long lists of ordnance and stores required for each division of the forces, even to the number of flints for Brown Bess, carbine, and pistol.† The last memorandum of this series concludes with a pregnant paragraph. ANN. 1808.

"These plans upon Spain would be much facilitated by anything which could be done to alarm Buonaparte in France. Surely this is not impossible; and the manner in which his armies are now spread in all parts of Europe, each portion of them having great objects and ample employment, which cannot be given up without injury to his affairs, afford an opportunity which ought not to be passed by."

Here spoke the victor of Assaye, and one cannot wonder if such bold counsel found at first but faint response in the Cabinet. Although Nelson was dead, his captains held the seas; but the record of the land forces of Great Britain for the last fifty years was not one to reflect on with pride. Yorktown and the Netherlands, Saratoga and the Waal, had dimmed the glories of Dettingen, Minden, and even Maida; matters had not mended very much since Cope's dragoons fled before Prince Charlie's half-armed clansmen at Preston Pans. Unsatisfactory state of the British army.

* *Stanhope*, 69. † *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 35–82.

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ÆT. 38. True, there were the Indian, the Egyptian, and the Danish campaigns; but the first two had been in distant scenes, and in the last, much glory could not be claimed for scattering the Danish militia. At sea, therefore, if you will—witness St. Vincent, the Nile, and Trafalgar—our wooden walls will batter down any fleet or blockade any port; but a second-rate army, under generals mostly unsuccessful, and inexperienced except in hunting down the "mild Hindoo" and dispersing hordes of Moslem barbarians, is not the kind of force to pit against the seasoned legions of Napoleon. The bone and muscle and stout hearts were there to fill the ranks, of the same quality that manned the fleets of Nelson and Howe; but the well-nigh universal and inveterate habit of hard drinking had fuddled the brains of that class which ought to have led them. During the American war Lord North, scanning a list of officers submitted for his approval, observed drily, "I know not what effect these names may have on the enemy, but I know they make *me* tremble." When Sir Ralph Abercromby went to Ireland as Commander of the Forces in 1798, he was so much shocked by the condition of the service that he issued a general order which Lord Camden, the Lord Lieutenant, in writing to Pitt, referred to as "injudicious and almost criminal." One of the paragraphs was to this effect: "The very disgraceful frequency of Courts-martial, and the many complaints of irregularities in the conduct of the troops, have too unfortunately proved the army to be in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to every one but the enemy." In the interval the Duke of York, although an unsuccessful commander in the field, had proved an effective reformer at the Horse Guards. Experience and military talent were just beginning to be recognised as qualifications for high command, preferable to jobbery and family interest—recognised, that is to say, to a degree which painfully awakened ministers to the fact that experience and military talent were exceedingly scarce commodities.*

* See Appendix C, p. 404.

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ANN. 1808.

Altered relations with Spain.

Suddenly, affairs took a turn which, by ranging Spain on the side of her ancient enemy Great Britain, brought Wellesley's suggestion of action in the Peninsula into immediate prominence. Possibly the germ of the idea had been planted in his mind by William Pitt, who not many months before his death had indicated the Spanish peninsula as the spot where the stand against Napoleon must ultimately be made.

A witless King, a scandalous Queen, a greedy favourite—such were the rulers who had prostrated Spain at the tyrant's feet. But the national spirit was not yet dead; a patriotic party was forming behind Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias, the heir to the kingdom. In his design to obtain possession of Spain, Napoleon had the connivance of Russia, whose interest it was to divert attention from her doings in Poland. Desiring a pretext for sending an army into Spain, Napoleon, who had concluded with Charles IV. a treaty engaging France and Spain in a combined attack on Portugal, secretly encouraged Ferdinand to rise against the King, the Queen, and Godoy, and received from that prince overtures for an alliance by marriage with the Imperial family of France. Godoy, to whose knowledge Napoleon was careful that information of this transaction should come, obtained an order for the imprisonment of Ferdinand on a charge of high treason; but the prince's popularity was so great that alarming disturbances took place in the capital. Godoy, taking fright, obtained from the King a proclamation of pardon, and released the prince.

Napoleon's designs upon Spain.

With Portugal Napoleon had dealt with less ceremony. When the Portuguese Government hesitated to close their ports to British trade, he sent General Junot to take possession of Lisbon, whereupon the Prince Regent, with greater sagacity than dignity, gathered his family and friends around him, and, on the approach of General Junot, took ship and sailed off for the Portuguese colony of Brazil.

The French occupy Lisbon.

Portugal was but a mouthful for Napoleon, though a rich

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ÆT. 38.

one; Spain was a nobler prize, and the Emperor's designs became more clear in that direction at the beginning of 1808. His brother-in-law Murat crossed the Spanish frontier at the head of 80,000 men, and took possession of San Sebastian, Pamplona, Figueras, and Barcelona. At the same time, Napoleon kept up an amicable correspondence with the King of Spain, expressing his earnest desire for the completion of the projected alliance of their families by marriage. Assuming the rights of exclusive possessor of Portugal, he proposed to hand it over to the King of Spain in exchange for Galicia, Biscay, and Navarre. Godoy, among whose vices dulness of perception could not be numbered, saw that the game was up in the Old World, and, following the example of the royal family of Portugal, planned the secret departure of the Court to the Spanish territories in South America, where the seat of sovereignty might be founded anew, beyond the grasp of the terrible Corsican. The secret leaked out: Prince Ferdinand indignantly protested against the intended desertion of the country by its monarch: in March, 1808, the people rose in arms, seized Godoy, and forced the King to abdicate in favour of Ferdinand. Godoy's life was saved only by the personal intervention of the new King, who resumed negociations with Napoleon for the hand of one of his family.

Abdication of Charles IV.

It was far from the Emperor's intention to strengthen the seat of a Bourbon on the throne of Spain. He remained in communication with the dethroned king as well as with the new one, and in playing off one party against the other Napoleon perceived the surest means of getting the realm of Spain into his own undisputed possession. His attitude towards both was indicated by the occupation of Madrid by Murat, the establishment of military law in the capital, ostensibly only until the dissensions in the state should be reconciled, and the appointment of General Grouchy as Governor. Godoy was taken out of prison and sent to Bayonne, whither the Emperor had repaired, in order better to direct the course of events.

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Meanwhile King Charles had revoked his abdication, and appealed to Napoleon for his support. He and his queen were summoned to take counsel at Bayonne with the great arbiter of Europe. Ferdinand, also, having formally notified to Napoleon his accession to the throne, was persuaded to proceed to Bayonne, to confirm the alliance to which he had been induced to believe Napoleon was about to admit him. Charles and his Queen, Godoy and King Ferdinand, having thus all been led into the trap, the Emperor threw off the mask. First, on 5th May, he extracted from Charles the abdication of all his rights in favour of the Emperor of the French, and, next, on the following day obtained from Ferdinand unconditional surrender of his claim to the throne. ANN. 1808.

Napoleon dismisses the Bourbon dynasty.

It is clear that Napoleon greatly underrated the strength of the patriotic party in Spain. With Murat at the head of a powerful army in Madrid—Junot holding Lisbon with another army—Dupont at Valladolid—and Catalonia, Biscay, and Navarre already occupied in force by other French generals, he felt little apprehension of any resistance that might be offered by the mere people. It was a momentous miscalculation. Wherever the invaders came in contact with the Spanish population, their severity and want of consideration brought about violent friction, and the ancient friendship between the two nations was exchanged for the bitterest hate. Spain had been betrayed by corrupt and incompetent rulers, its armies allowed to decay under officers as ignorant as they were aristocratic and vain; but the ancient spirit of the conquerors of half the world was not dead in the mass of the people. Far and wide the peasantry and townspeople flew to arms: on 2nd May an insurrection took place in Madrid, only to be subdued with merciless slaughter by Murat's troops, many thousands of Spaniards being mowed down in the streets, and others executed afterwards in cold blood. The disturbance was considered at an end. Joseph, brother of Napoleon, was placed on the throne of Spain, and Murat was sent to reign over Naples in his

Resistance of the Spanish people.

Joseph made King of Spain.

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Æt. 38.

stead. Many craven grandees, anxious at any price to secure their property and position, welcomed the new King with importunate servility; but these were not the people of Spain. The bloodshed in Madrid only served to nourish the growing flame of revolt. The provinces of Galicia and Asturia led the way under an elected junta at Oviedo; similar juntas were established in nearly every province, expelling or executing such officials as fear of France withheld from joining the insurrection. The northern Junta sent two deputies to England, imploring aid in money and arms: that of Seville invited the co-operation of Sir Hew Dalrymple, British Governor of Gibraltar. Solano, Governor of Cadiz, hesitating to attack the French squadron in the harbour, was slain as a traitor to the national cause, and de Morla, the Governor elected in his place, opened fire on Admiral Rossilly's ships in the presence of Lord Collingwood's fleet, the assistance of which, though proffered, he declined. On 14th June Rossilly surrendered at discretion. A French corps under General Avril was approaching to relieve the garrison, and regain possession of Cadiz; but on the arrival off the harbour of 5,000 British from Gibraltar, under General Spencer, it fell back. Spencer landed and took up a position at Ayamonte, on which the French garrison surrendered.

Insurrection of the provinces.

Thus it had come to pass that Great Britain, without any change of policy on her part, found herself the ally of that nation against which she had been busily fitting out fleets and mustering troops.

The case of Portugal.

With Portugal the case was different. Portugal was an old ally of England; many English merchants were in business in Lisbon, and the trade between Lisbon and London was very large and profitable, for nobody drank so much port as Englishmen. Napoleon's sole pretext for aggression on Portugal had been the refusal of her Government to break off all relations with Great Britain. It had certainly been wise policy in King George's ministers to defend Portugal; but, while they hesitated, Portugal

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disappeared from the map of Europe, and they continued to prepare their expedition against the Spanish colonies. ANN. 1808.

Then came the Spanish insurrection. The delegates from the Junta were welcomed in London with great display of popular sympathy. Money, arms, and stores were shipped in liberal measure for the patriots in Galicia, and General Spencer was given a free hand in Andalusia.

More, however, had to be done: the moment foreseen after Austerlitz by Pitt, and greatly longed for by him, had arrived. In Spain was to take place the final struggle against the Terror of Europe. Sir Arthur Wellesley had elaborated all the details of the expedition against the Spanish colonies in America: 9,000 troops lay at Cork ready for embarkation, waiting only for the appointment of a general to command them. No doubt that had this expedition sailed the command would have been entrusted to Sir Arthur. But it did not sail; just as in 1795, so now, Wellesley's prospect of service in the New World was altered at the last moment.

Sir Arthur appointed to command expedition to the Peninsula.

In June, 1808, Sir Arthur, who had been promoted to Lieut.-General on 25th April, was appointed to the command of the forces assembled at Cork, with instructions to proceed to the coast of Portugal, and co-operate with the Spanish and Portuguese commanders. The night before he left London to take command at Cork, Wellesley had a conversation with J. W. Croker, who had undertaken to discharge the Parliamentary business of the Irish Office during the Chief Secretary's absence at the seat of war. After discussing some bill which was then in preparation, the General relapsed into a reverie, and remained silent so long that Croker asked him what he was thinking about.

"Why, to say the truth," he replied, "I am thinking of the French I am going to fight. I have not seen them since the campaign in Flanders, when they were capital soldiers; and a dozen years of victory under Buonaparte must have made them better still. They have besides, it seems, a new

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Æt. 39. system of strategy, which has outmanœuvred and overwhelmed all the armies of Europe. 'Tis enough to make one thoughtful: but no matter: my die is cast: they may overwhelm me, but I don't think they will outmanœuvre me. First, because I am not afraid of them, as everybody else seems to be; and secondly, because if what I hear of their system of manœuvres be true, I think it a false one as against steady troops.* I suspect all the continental armies were more than half beaten before the battle was begun. I, at least, will not be frightened beforehand."

During his voyage out, Sir Arthur devoted his leisure to acquiring a rough knowledge of the Spanish language, by means of a dictionary and a Spanish translation of the Book of Common Prayer,† so that by the time he reached Castile, as he told Lady Salisbury, "I was perfectly able to understand the addresses of congratulation made to me for some little successes I had had about Oporto, and so on."‡

Although Wellesley had received strict instructions from Lord Castlereagh to proceed with his armament off the Tagus, "not separating yourself from it," but sending a confidential officer to Coruña to learn the actual state of things,§ he considered it within the limits of his discretion to depart from these instructions. The fleet sailed from Cork on 12th July. Next day, preferring, as he always did, his own ears and eyes to those of any subordinate, Sir Arthur went on board the *Crocodile*, a fast-sailing frigate, sailed ahead to Coruña, where he arrived on the 20th, and put himself in communication with the Junta of Galicia. Nothing could exceed the confidence and enthusiasm of these gentlemen. It is true that the first news they had to communicate was the defeat on 14th July of 50,000 Spaniards—the great army of Galicia—at Rio Seco by Marshal Bessières;

Wellesley arrives at Coruña.

* The French system of fighting in heavy columns against troops in line.

† This prayer-book is now in the possession of Lord de Ros, to whose mother it was given by the Duke of Wellington.

‡ *Salisbury MSS.*, 1834. § *Despatches*, iv. 11.

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but this they represented as an immaterial check, as, indeed, a moral victory. Nevertheless Wellesley perceived that it had given the French command of the valley of the Douro—cutting off communication between Galicia and the southern provinces. The spirit, however, of Spaniards and Portuguese was excellent: "the difference between any two men is whether the one is a better or a worse Spaniard, and the better Spaniard is the one which detests the French most heartily." * Howbeit, when Wellesley came to real business with the Junta he found it a different affair. They were eager for money, arms, and stores: they accepted an instalment of £200,000 willingly enough; but his offer to co-operate with the Galician officers in retrieving the reverse at Rio Seco was received with coldness. Pride of race and confidence in the undoubted gallantry of Spanish soldiers blinded them to the miserable incompetence of their officers and the defects of their organisation, while hereditary hatred of the English rendered the idea of assistance from them intolerable. The Junta recommended the employment of British troops in the north of Portugal, and promised to send a Spanish division to Oporto. This rebuff confirmed Wellesley in the belief that had for some time been fixing itself in his mind that in Portugal was to be found the proper theatre of British operations in the Peninsula.† With a powerful navy at its back, and transports to ensure reinforcements and supplies, or, in case of defeat, to provide the means of withdrawal, the army would be secure in the two conditions to which every commander must assign the place of first importance—supplies and communication. With command of the sea, the real base of his operations would be Britain itself, while Portugal, a strip of land with numerous harbours, would form the point of communication between

ANN. 1808.

Coldness of the Junta.

* Sir A. Wellesley to Viscount Castlereagh, 21st July, 1808.

† In a letter to Mr. Raikes in 1833 he referred to Portugal as "the basis on which the machinery was founded which finally overthrew the world" (*Raikes Correspondence*, p. 62).

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Æt. 39. northern and southern Spain, so long as the French should remain in possession of the northern provinces. In the opinion thus adopted he never wavered; it remains the key to his whole subsequent strategy in the Peninsula.

The fleet having arrived off Cape Finisterre on 22nd July, Wellesley preceded it to Oporto, where he arrived on the 24th. The insurrection was general throughout northern Portugal, and a considerable force existed on paper; but it was miserably armed and, if possible, worse disciplined, most of their old officers having fled with the royal family to Brazil. Fifteen hundred of these troops lay in Oporto, five thousand at Coimbra. Quitting Oporto early on the 25th, Wellesley sailed in the *Crocodile* for the Tagus, in order to communicate with the British admiral, Sir Charles Cotton; but he left orders for the fleet to remain off the mouth of the Mondego. To the Cabinet in London the Tagus had always presented itself as the point where active operations ought to begin: but to the General on the spot it seemed impracticable, or at least unwise, to disembark precisely where the enemy was in greatest force, and immediately under the guns of the forts. Junot had nearly 30,000 troops distributed through Portugal, of which 12,000 were at his headquarters in Lisbon.*

Sir Charles Cotton agreed with Wellesley that the most favourable spot for debarkation was Mondego Bay; which, although upwards of a hundred miles north of the Tagus, was the nearest spot where that operation could be effected except in presence of the enemy. Orders, therefore, were sent to General Spencer at Cadiz to repair with all haste by sea to the Mondego, whither Sir Arthur returned.

The utter indiscipline of the Spanish and Portuguese

* Wellesley, perhaps intentionally, underrated the strength of the French army at this time, estimating it at 16,000 men (*Despatches*, iv. 67). The Imperial muster rolls disclose the fact that 29,584 troops marched with Junot into Portugal, to which must be added 1,200 in garrison at Elvas and Almeida, and the official embarkation return shows that 26,000 left with him when he evacuated Lisbon (*Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 207).

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troops, the ferocity of the half-armed peasantry, and the relentless severity with which the French had set about quelling the insurrection, had combined to give a horrible ferocity to the warfare which had now endured for three months. Stragglers and wounded were murdered, sometimes with the addition of atrocious mutilations. Colonel Réné, a French envoy sent to Lisbon before the commencement of hostilities, was captured on his way back and sawn in pieces alive. The balance of cruelty was redressed by frightful massacres of townspeople and peasants by the French at Leiria, Evora, and other places. Technically the Portuguese and Spaniards were rebels, for the Grandees had acknowledged the French as rulers of the country, and peasants encountered or taken with arms in their hands were liable to death by the laws of war; but all this was abhorrent to Sir Arthur's ideas of fair fighting. His general order before landing reads like a gospel of mercy, expressing his firm intention of punishing with the utmost severity all offences against persons or property, and even prescribing minute regulations for behaviour in church, and in presence of religious processions in the streets. If the empire of England has been won by the sword, she has at the same time been foremost in the cause of humanity, and in banishing from warfare all supplementary and avoidable horrors.

ANN. 1808.

Ferocious character of the war.

Although deplorably ill provided with land transport, Sir Arthur positively forbade the practice customary with armies in the field, of pressing carts and draught animals * and requisitioning supplies without payment. From the first he insisted on everything being paid for, not only in friendly countries like Portugal and Spain, but after he had carried the war across the frontier into France. It cost him a great struggle to enforce this principle: the punishment of plunder was frightfully frequent and severe; it set him at an initial disadvantage, and a serious one, in his contest with an enemy

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 106.

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Æt. 39. which "made the war support the war," and seized everything that they needed for daily consumption. But he succeeded in carrying out his will, and the time was to come when his army was to reap the reward of self-restraint, for the principle is of universal application that short accounts make long friends.

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CHAPTER V.

Campaign of Vimeiro.

1808.

July . . 1808. The expedition is reinforced.
„ 14 . . . . Surrender of Dupont at Baylen.
„ 30 . . . . Sir A. Wellesley superseded in command.
Flight of King Joseph from Madrid.
August 1-5. . The British army disembarks in the Mondego.
Difficulties with the Portuguese authorities.
„ 13 . . Advance of the British army.
„ 17 . . Combat of Roliça.
„ 20 . . Arrival of Sir H. Burrard.
August 21 . . Battle of Vimeiro.
After the victory, Sir Hew Dalrymple arrives in command.
„ 30 . . The Convention of Cintra.
September 10. Evacuation of Lisbon by the French.
Political settlement of Portugal.
„ 17. Sir A. Wellesley returns to England.
Dissatisfaction caused by the Convention of Cintra.
November 14. Court of Inquiry on the Generals.
December 29. Its report and finding.

CASTLEREAGH had been slowly convincing his colleagues that in landing 9,000 British troops in the presence of French armies numbering 300,000 seasoned soldiers they had embarked on a hare-brained undertaking which must end in failure, and might mean disaster. He persuaded them to increase the force; but there were professional objections to entrusting a larger army to an officer so junior in his rank as Sir Arthur Wellesley. Accordingly, Sir John Moore, who had been despatched from the Mediterranean with his fine force of 10,000 men on a will-o'-the-wisp expedition to

The expedition reinforced.

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Æt. 39. Sweden, was recalled to the Peninsula, and Brigadier-Generals Acland and Anstruther were sent from England with 5,000 more; thus, with Spencer's division, raising the total British strength in Portugal to some 30,000 of all arms. On 30th July, when on the point of disembarking in Mondego Bay, Sir Arthur received a despatch from the Horse Guards, informing him that Sir Hew Dalrymple had been appointed to the chief command, an arrangement which reduced Sir Arthur, though retaining a division, from the first place in seniority to the seventh.

Sir A. Wellesley superseded in command.

Surrender of Dupont at Baylen.

Simultaneously with this somewhat chilling intelligence, Sir Arthur received news of Dupont's capitulation to Castaños at Baylen on 18th July, which made him certain that General Spencer would presently be with him, and that the debarkation might proceed without undue risk of interference on the part of the enemy. This surprising success of Castaños, whereby a corps of 18,000 French soldiers laid down their arms,* was the crowning act of a series of successes at Zaragoza, Valencia, and other places which materially loosened Napoleon's grasp of the Peninsula. Whatever failures and incompetence may have to be recorded against the Spanish generals hereafter, the spirited manner in which they acted at this period, and the noble efforts of the Spanish and Portuguese people struggling to be free ought never to be forgotten. But for these, the diversion created by Great Britain on the coast of Portugal must have proved of little avail against the resources of the French Emperor.

Flight of King Joseph.

The effect of the victory of Baylen was immediate. Joseph, who had been proclaimed King of Spain and the

* They did so on the stipulation that they should be sent by sea to France, but the Spaniards acted with treacherous cruelty, massacring many of their prisoners in cold blood, and bestowing others in hulks, whence very few ever came out alive. Eighty officers were shot down together in the town of Lebrixa. Incidents such as this should be borne in mind when considering the subsequent cruelties inflicted by the French on the people of Spain and Portugal.

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Indies on 24th July, received news of Dupont's disaster on the 29th. A council of war was held in Madrid, the result of which was that King Joseph abandoned the capital, withdrawing all his troops to the north of the Ebro. The Duc d'Abrantes,* was thus left isolated in Portugal under rapidly increasing difficulties. The Spanish troops under his command revolted; the insurrection spread among the Portuguese like fire in stubble; at Beja, Villa Viçosa, and Leiria the rising had to be suppressed with horrid slaughter. Junot himself remained in Lisbon, where his presence alone prevented the people seizing the capital. ANN. 1808.

Dupont's corps having been effaced at Baylen, General Spencer was released from his post of observation at Cadiz. He was already on his way to the Tagus before the summons which Wellesley had sent reached him, and joined his chief at Mondego Bay on 5th August. General Loison, who had threatened at one time to oppose the disembarkation, had now crossed to the south side of the Tagus to quell the insurrection in the Alemtejo; General Acland's corps, which was to sail from the Downs on 19th July, was hourly expected in the offing. Under the circumstances, Wellesley felt justified in assuming the offensive at once, without waiting further reinforcements. He was the more anxious to do so because of the impatience of the Portuguese insurgent leaders, who began to fret at seeing the army kept so long on board ship.

The landing was accomplished between the 1st and 5th August, and the troops went into bivouac and cantonments at Lavos.† After the arrival of General Spencer, the force under Wellesley's command consisted of the 5th, 6th, 9th, The army disembarks.

* Marshal Junot. All Napoleon's marshals bore high-sounding titles, but, in order to avoid confusion, I shall mention them by their personal surnames.

† It is said that immediately on landing Sir Arthur ordered the amputation of all the pigtails, then worn by soldiers according to regulation, and that these senseless adornments were never restored. The officers of the Welsh Fusiliers (old 23rd) still wear a black bow of riband behind the collar of the tunic, a survival of the departed pigtail.

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Æt. 39. 29th, 32nd, 36th, 38th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 71st, 82nd, and 91st Foot, with a battalion each of the 60th and 95th Rifles, formed in six brigades with half a battery of artillery attached to each. The only cavalry was the 20th Light Dragoons, half of whom were without horses, and a nine-pounder brigade of artillery was held in reserve. In all there were about 14,200 men.

The transport service was lamentably deficient, as Sir Arthur bitterly complained in writing to Castlereagh.

8th August.—"This department deserves your serious attention. The existence of the army depends on it, and yet the people who manage it are incapable of managing anything out of a counting-house. I shall be obliged to leave Spencer's guns behind for want of means of moving them, and I should have been obliged to leave my own, if it were not for the horses of the Irish Commissariat. Let nobody ever prevail upon you to send a corps to any part of Europe without horses to draw their guns. It is not true that horses lose their condition at sea." *

Junot, though unable himself to leave Lisbon unprotected, recalled Loison from the south of the Tagus and sent him forward to Abrantes; Delaborde was posted at Alcobaça to observe the movements of the British, with instructions to form a junction with Loison at Leiria, where the Junta had arranged to place a magazine for the use of Wellesley's force. But Sir Arthur, though long delayed at the Mondego for want of transport, managed to be beforehand with his enemy. Advancing from Lavos on 10th August, he occupied Leiria on the 11th, when he began to realise how little his allies could be relied on. The whole Portuguese force north of the Tagus was less than 10,000 men, yet the tone of their commander, Dom Bernardim Freire, and of the Junta of Oporto, was of the sort that should be backed by 100,000. No provision whatever had been made for feeding the men they had, and not only were the stores laid up at Leiria for

Difficulties with the Portuguese authorities.

* *Despatches*, iv. 59.

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the British army entirely consumed by the Portuguese, but General Freire coolly requested Wellesley to supply the Portuguese troops with bread from his own commissariat throughout the campaign. To this preposterous demand Sir Arthur replied that, inasmuch as he drew his own bread stuff from England, and would pay for meat and wine supplied in the country, he could not feed his allies also; but he gave Freire 5,000 stand of arms, with ammunition. ANN. 1808.

From Leiria, two routes offered themselves to a force advancing upon Lisbon—the first running inland by the east of Monte Junto to Santarem, and thence down the right bank of the Tagus; the second along the coast as far as the Sierra de Baragueda, turning the position at Torres Vedras, forcing that at Mafra, and so by Quelus to Lisbon.

Sir Arthur never hesitated in his choice of roads. Wretchedly weak in cavalry, he could not hope to protect his communication with the Mondego, whence, were he to take the inland route, all his supplies must have been drawn; whereas in selecting the route between the sea and the mountains, he could remain in touch with the fleet all the time, and, if necessary, cover the debarkation of reinforcements. It is true that his flank was thereby dangerously exposed, but even in the event of a reverse, the transports would be at hand, which would diminish the risk. In the letters he left for Burrard he strongly recommended that Sir John Moore's corps should disembark in the Mondego, and proceed by the route of Santarem—thus forming a second line of operation, to which sound tacticians usually take objection on principle. But when it is remembered that Wellesley possessed accurate surveys of the whole of these alternative routes, that he designed that Moore should turn the position of Torres Vedras on the east, while he himself having turned it on the west, carried Mafra, and turned the heights of Bellas, should join Moore before Lisbon, most

Advance of the British army.

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Æt. 39. military men will agree that the plan of campaign was a masterly one.*

But in this scheme the Portuguese Commander-in-chief would take no part. It must be allowed in his justification that his Government—the Junta of Oporto—had only limited confidence in the thoroughness of British support, and no experience at all in the quality of British soldiers or the skill of their generals. Accordingly, when on 12th August Wellesley communicated to Freire his intention of marching on the morrow, and fixed the hour for the departure of the Portuguese corps, Freire laid before him a plan of campaign of his own, involving an advance upon Santarem through the interior. He declined to co-operate with Sir Arthur, unless on the condition that the British Commissariat should undertake the whole charge of feeding the Portuguese army. Now, although Wellesley did not attach much value to the Portuguese troops as a fighting force, seeing how miserably they were equipped and disciplined, he perceived the importance of maintaining at least the semblance of co-operation, if it were only to convey assurance to the populace. By laborious diplomacy he obtained Freire's consent to detach 1,400 foot and 250 horse to act with the British and be supported at their expense; and he also persuaded him to remain at Leiria for a week, to protect his rear and communications during the advance.

Sir Arthur's impending supersession had no effect either in retarding or quickening his movements. So much his despatches at the time clearly prove, although he was afterwards charged with having tried to snatch a success before the arrival of a senior officer. He wrote repeatedly to Burrard, informing him fully of the state of the country, of his own dispositions, and of his views upon the proper way of conducting the campaign. To Lord Castlereagh he

* It was severely criticised at the time and afterwards. Wellesley's justification is contained in his statement before the Court of Inquiry.—*Despatches*, iv. 180.

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referred thus, on 1st August, to the change in his own prospects:— ANN. 1808.

"All that I can say upon that subject is, that whether I am to command the army or not, or am to quit it, I shall do my best to ensure its success; and you may rely upon it that I shall not hurry the operations, or commence them one moment before they ought to be commenced, in order that I may obtain the credit of the success. . . . The Government will determine for me in what way they will employ me hereafter, whether here or elsewhere." *

Again, on the 8th:—

"I shall be the junior of the Lieut.-Generals; however, I am ready to serve the Government wherever and as they please."

Sir Arthur now went forward alone in his design of driving Junot out of Lisbon, putting his Portuguese allies out of his calculations.

13*th August*.—"It is obvious that whether I am too weak to contend with General Junot, or sufficiently strong for him, there is nothing in common between the Portuguese troops and me. My object is to obtain possession of Lisbon, and to that I must adhere, whatever may be the consequence, till I shall have attained it, as being the first and greatest step towards dispossessing the French of Portugal." †

Leaving Freire, therefore, at Leiria, Sir Arthur marched south on 13th August, General Delaborde falling back from Alcobaça on his approach, and taking up a position at Obidos, about twenty miles further on the road to Lisbon. Loison, who was at Thomar on the 11th, retired to Santarem, twenty miles east of Obidos. On the 15th, the 60th and 95th Rifles had the first brush with the French outposts at Roliça. Having dislodged them, they followed over-zealously in pursuit, and were saved from an awkward predicament by the arrival of General Spencer with supports. They lost

The British army advances.

* *Despatches*, iv. 43. † *Ibid.*, iv. 74.

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Æt. 39. nine-and-twenty killed and wounded, among the former being Lieutenant Bunbury, the first officer killed in the Peninsular campaign.

Combat of Roliça. Delaborde, though he had retired from Obidos, yet, expecting support from Loison, continued to occupy the plateau of Roliça, an isolated table-land rising in the centre of a valley formed by the spurs of the mountains. A mile to the rear of, and parallel with this strong position, rose the steep ridge of Zambugeira. During the night of 16th and 17th August Sir Arthur was roused from his sleep and informed that a stranger demanded an interview on business that would brook no delay. A monk was admitted.

"I am come," said he, "to inform you that the French corps before you intends to retire before daylight, and if you want to catch your enemy you must be quick."

"How do you know that?" asked Sir Arthur.

"Well," replied the monk, "when General Junot's army first entered Portugal, he had his quarters in our convent of Alcobaça, and one of his staff shared my cell. We became very intimate, being both young men, and now the same officer is again lodged with me. Last evening he sat copying a despatch. I was curious to know what it was about. I stole behind him, clapped my hands over his eyes, and, in a feigned voice, challenged him to guess which of the brethren was his captor, for you must know that we and the younger officers are accustomed to play like schoolboys. He struggled to get free, but in vain, for I am a powerful fellow; then, while he was running over the names of the brethren, I quietly mastered the contents of his despatch, which were as I have informed you." *

Early in the morning the British moved forward to the attack in three columns, numbering 13,480 infantry, 470 cavalry, and 18 guns, disposed in three columns. On the right

* In the *De Ros MS.* the Duke of Wellington is reported as having said that the monk did not appear in person at his tent, but conveyed the information by means of a peasant.

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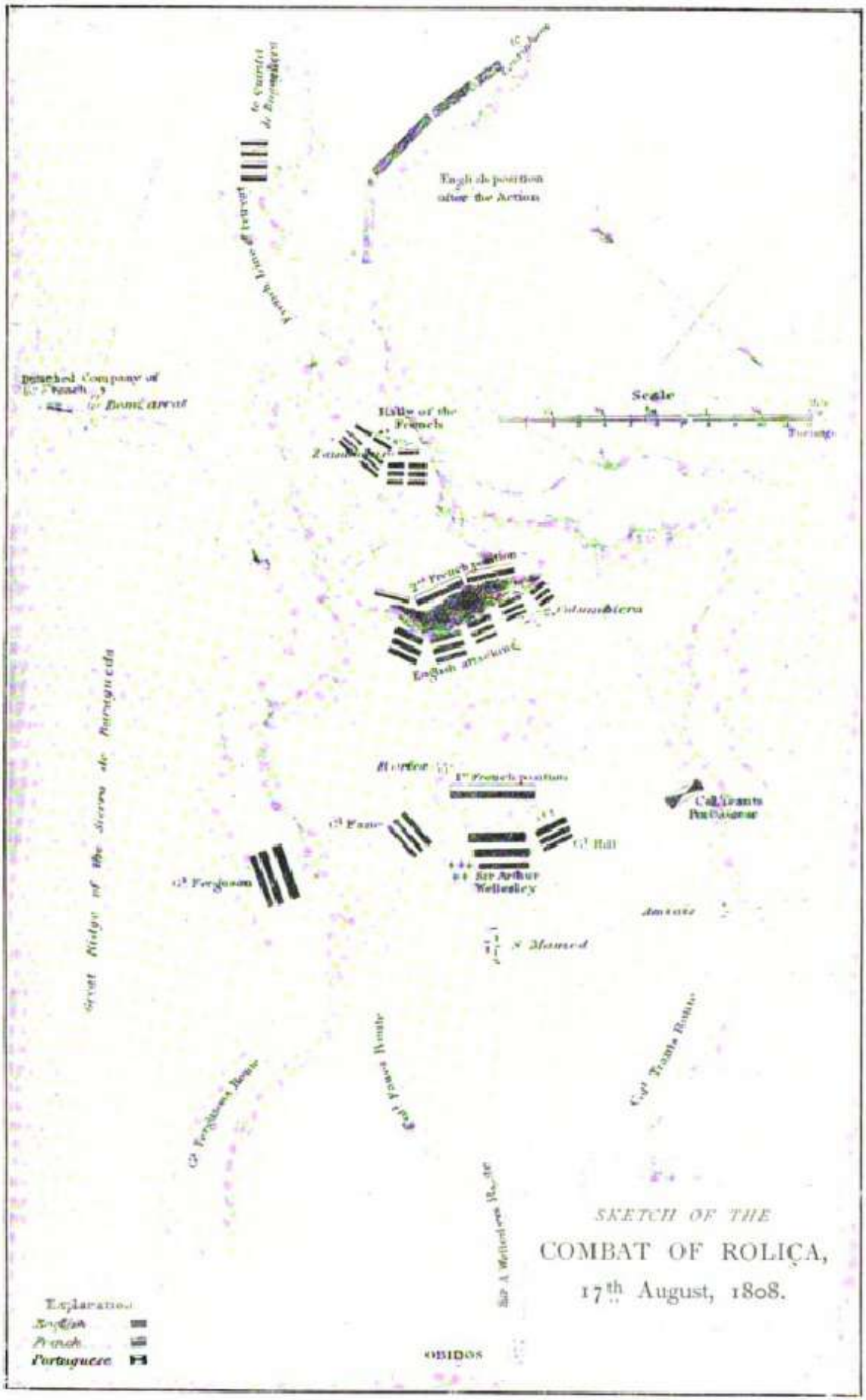

SKETCH OF THE
COMBAT OF ROLIÇA,
17th August, 1808.

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was the Portuguese contingent under Colonel Trant; the left, under General Ferguson, moved along the heights on the south-east, to intercept any movement on the part of Loison's corps; and the centre, 9,000 strong with 12 guns, under Wellesley himself, advanced against the position in front, General Craufurd's brigade being in reserve. Fane's brigade, extended to connect Ferguson's column with the centre, drove in the enemy's skirmishers and appeared on his right flank, with Ferguson's brigades descending the hill behind them. Simultaneously Trant's Portuguese showed on the French left, and General Hill and Nightingale, supported by the fire of nine guns, delivered a vigorous attack in front. Delaborde, outnumbered by nearly three to one, perceived that he was outflanked; but with admirable nerve he made use of his cavalry, in which he was far stronger than the British, and, covered by them, moved steadily back to the ridge of Zambugeira. ANN. 1808.

It was Wellesley's first experience of the sensation of numerical superiority over his enemy, but it was also the first time he had encountered a practised modern tactician. The retreat of the French was superbly executed. Their new front lying along the summit of a precipitous ridge, Ferguson and Trant resumed their flanking movements along the hills to the right and left, and the 29th Regiment, supported by the 9th, led the attack in front; the 29th stormed the steep brow first, but being overpowered by superior numbers, and driven back, with the loss of their colonel, the Hon. G. Lake, they reformed, advanced again with the 9th, and later, the 5th; while General Ferguson, appearing again beyond the enemy's right flank, showed Delaborde that the position was lost. Still this gallant General, though himself wounded, would not yield. He fell back slowly, fighting every yard of the way, protecting in a masterly manner by his cavalry the movement of alternate masses of his infantry, until about four in the afternoon he entered a narrow pass in the mountains, where Wellesley could not

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Æt. 39. pursue him owing to his want of cavalry, and marched all night in the direction of Torres Vedras. The British loss in this action amounted to 479 killed, wounded, and missing, including 4 officers killed and 20 wounded. The French lost about 600 killed and wounded, and left three guns in the hands of the victors, though they carried off upwards of 50 prisoners of the 29th Regiment, including four officers.

Loison was now only five miles distant, at Bombaral; Sir Arthur, therefore, took up a position parallel to the road to Lourinha, whither he marched next day. He was delighted with the behaviour of his troops, of which the health remained excellent, although, having no tents, they were "in the sun all day and in the dew all night" *—such sun and dew as never shines and falls in England.

"As soon as Anstruther shall be landed," he wrote to Lord Castlereagh, "I shall give you a good account of the remainder of the French army; but I am afraid I shall not gain a complete victory; that is, I shall not entirely destroy them, for want of cavalry." †

On 20th August, being then at Vimeiro, the army was reinforced by the arrival of Anstruther's and Acland's brigades — 5,150 men in all. Hearing that Junot had marched from Lisbon with 2,000 men and taken command of the divisions of Delaborde and Loison at Torres Vedras, about ten miles to the south, Sir Arthur issued orders for the army to march against him at 4.30 on the morning of the 21st.

Arrival of Sir H. Burrard.

Sir Harry Burrard, however, having arrived off the coast late on the 20th, Wellesley went on board to report himself and surrender his command. He explained to Sir Harry the preparation he had made for the attack on the morrow, and repeated the recommendation he had made before leaving the Mondego, that Sir John Moore's corps should be disembarked in that river and proceed to Lisbon by the inland route of Santarem, so as to cut off Junot's retreat. Moore was already

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 116. † *Despatches*, iv. 88.

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at the Mondego, and had actually begun to disembark his corps; but Burrard sent him orders to re-embark and land at Maceira, so as to concentrate the whole British force in an advance on Lisbon. He considered Sir Arthur's scheme too venturesome, and ordered him to remain at Vimeiro till reinforced by Moore. ANN. 1808.

Sorely must Wellesley have chafed at having to countermand the advance.

"Sir Harry Burrard," he wrote to Castlereagh, "will probably acquaint your Lordship with the reasons which have induced him to call Sir John Moore's corps to the assistance of our army, which consists of 20,000 men, including the Portuguese army, which was to join this morning, notwithstanding former determinations to the contrary, and is opposed by, I am convinced, not more than 12,000 or 14,000 Frenchmen, and to halt here till Sir John's corps shall join. You will readily believe, however, that this determination is not in conformity with my opinion, and I only wish Sir Harry had landed, and seen things with his own eyes, before he made it." *

However, the stars in their courses were on the side of the daring, and against the over-cautious General. At midnight a German sergeant of dragoons dashed into the lines, announcing the approach of the French in great force, who, he said, were only three miles off. Relying on his patrols, Sir Arthur refrained from disturbing his troops before the usual hour, which was always before daybreak, and no signs of the enemy were detected till seven in the morning.

Battle of Vimeiro.

The village of Vimeiro stands on the road between Lourinha and Torres Vedras, where the river Maceira passes through a range of mountains running nearly east and west. The greater part of the British infantry, with eight guns, lay on the mountain to the west of the stream and village; Anstruther's and Fane's brigades occupied elevated ground on the

* *Despatches*, iv. 92.

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Æt. 39. east bank, with two half-brigades of artillery; while the cavalry and reserve of artillery lay in the valley behind Fane's rifle brigade.

Large bodies of the enemy's cavalry appearing to the south about eight o'clock, threatening the British left, Wellesley threw four brigades from his left across the stream to form the right of the new alignment on heights to the east of the village. The Portuguese infantry, supported by Craufurd's brigade, were moved still further to the left, on the ridge terminating at the landing-place of Maceira. General Hill moved to the height immediately overlooking Vimeiro on the west, his division forming a reserve to the whole.

The action began by General Delaborde, supported by General Loison, attacking Anstruther and Fane in their advanced position, General Kellermann moving behind them with a brigade of grenadiers in reserve; General Brennier, who was to attack the British left at the same time, being delayed by the broken ground. Delaborde's battalions, although enfiladed by Robe's guns in Acland's brigade, advanced with the usual famous impetuosity of the French infantry, but they were met in a manner novel to them. "They seemed to feel their way less," said Wellesley long afterwards with a smile, "than I always found them do afterwards."* Never before had these massive columns been received by troops standing deployed in two ranks, and consequently with a firing front extending far beyond the flanks of their assailants. The attacking force first came in contact with the 50th—commonly called "The Dirty Half-hundred"†—"not a good-looking regiment," as Wellesley said, "but devilish steady, who received them admirably, and

* *Croker*, ii. 122.

† Surely, surely our rulers were ill-advised when they decided it was impossible to link battalions and at the same time to retain the ancient numerals round which such a weight of glory had gathered. Soldiers have never taken kindly to the pseudo-feudalism of territorial designations. The old numbers are still used in common parlance, and it would seem not too late to restore them with all their myriad association.

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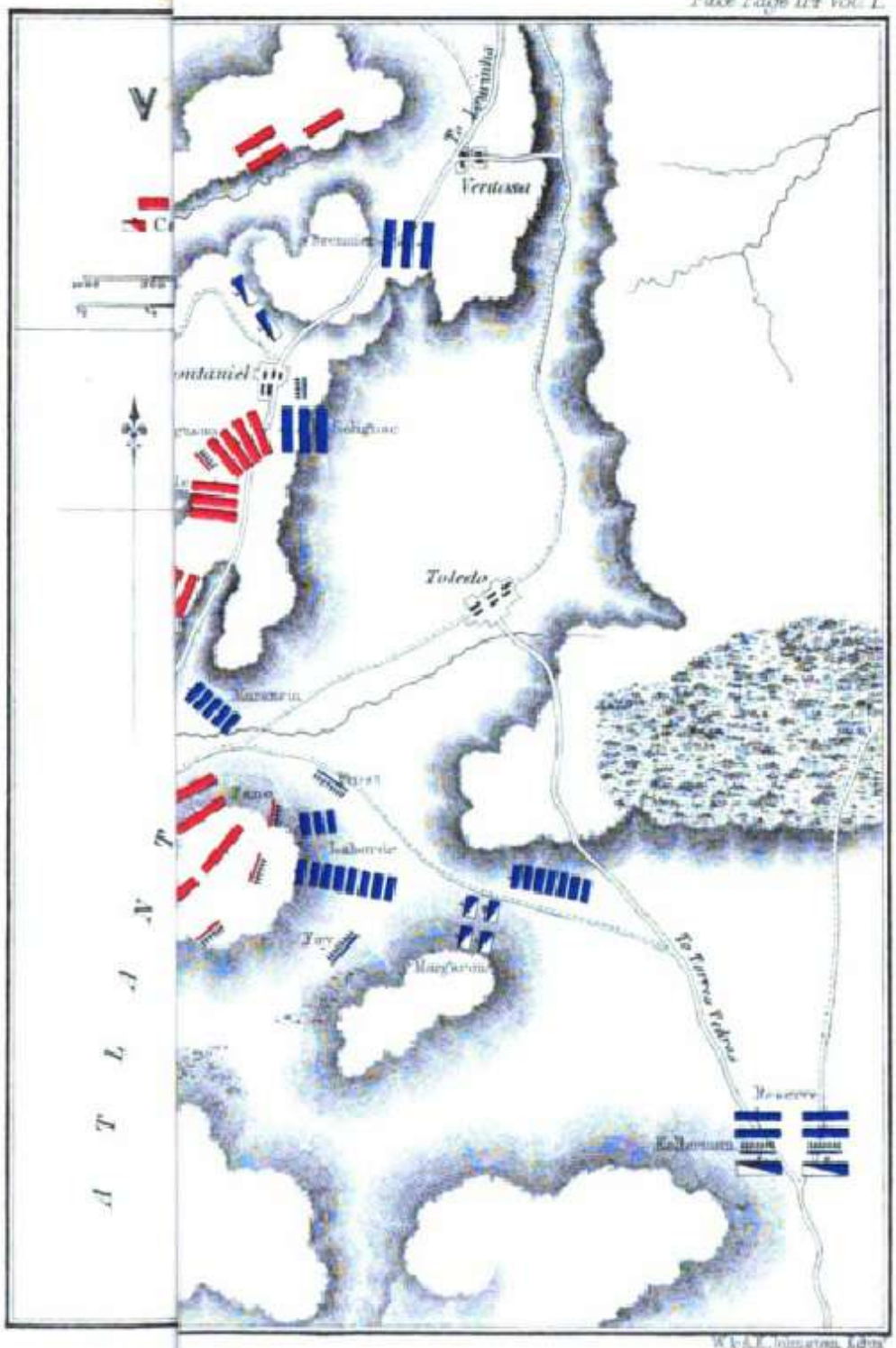

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brought them to a full stop immediately."* Next the 50th stood the 43rd, and these two regiments, after pouring in a shattering volley from their long front, charged with bayonet, and completely repulsed the attack. Acland, then, descending the hill, fell on Delaborde's right flank, and the French retired in confusion. Then it was that Wellesley felt his weakness in cavalry; an effective charge at this moment would have completed the rout. He had only a single weak squadron of the 20th Light Dragoons, which, coming suddenly in contact with a far superior body of horse under Margaron, suffered severely, their commander, Lieut.-Col. Taylor, being killed. ANN. 1808.

While the British right was thus engaged, General Solignac, supported by a large body of cavalry, was attacking their left. Mounting the height beyond the left of the British position, he expected to take Ferguson's brigade in flank; instead of which he found himself opposed to a solid front drawn right across the narrowest part of the ridge. Ferguson, strong in the support of Nightingale's and Bowes's brigades behind him, gave the enemy not a moment to reflect, but advanced towards him with the 36th, 41st, and 71st Regiments, while the guns maintained a galling fire. When within easy distance, he gave the word to charge. There was a moment of suspense as the line of red coats dashed against the heavy blue columns: then the blue began slowly to yield ground: the ridge widened as the French were pressed back, allowing room for the British front to be prolonged; first the 82nd, then the 29th being sent up into the fighting-line by General Nightingale. Solignac fell, severely wounded: his corps, now wholly detached from the main body of the French, was driven for two miles—the whole length of the ridge—down into the village of Perenza, where six of his guns were taken† and left in charge of the 71st and 82nd Regiments, while Ferguson continued to press on the enemy.

* *Croker*, ii. 122.

† "It was a most laughable sight to see the Highlanders in their kilts riding the French horses and driving the guns they had taken" (*Dumaresq MSS.*).

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Suddenly General Brennier, who had been in difficulties in a ravine and unable hitherto to take part in the action, appeared on the scene, and retook the guns by surprise. The British regiments, however, quickly rallied, poured in a volley of musketry, charged, and not only recaptured the guns, but took Brennier himself prisoner.

At noon the victory was all but complete: Junot had withdrawn so far to the east that the road to Torres Vedras lay open; Solignac, overpowered by Ferguson in front, and threatened in rear by the 5th Brigade and Portuguese contingent, must inevitably have surrendered, when suddenly came a command for the cessation of hostilities. Sir Harry Burrard had arrived on the field, after the commencement of the action, but had considerately refrained from interfering with Sir Arthur Wellesley's dispositions. Now, however, not apprehending that the enemy's whole force had been in action, and unaware that Solignac's corps had been cut off from the main body,* he decided that offensive operations must cease, and that his army should halt at Vimeiro till the arrival of Sir John Moore's corps.†

In vain Ferguson sent to represent to Wellesley the important advantage he must gain if allowed to proceed. In vain Wellesley urged on Sir Harry that his right, containing four battalions that had not been engaged, was several miles nearer Torres Vedras than the enemy, through which pass alone Junot could reach Lisbon. In vain he proposed to follow Junot with five brigades and force him across the Sierra Baragueda upon the Tagus, while General Hill with three brigades should push on to Torres Vedras to intercept him at Montechico.‡ Sir Harry Burrard could not share the

* See Sir H. Burrard's statement before the Court of Inquiry, *Despatches*, iv. 232.

† "Our brigade was then ordered to advance, but was not allowed by Sir H. Burrard; for which we all hope, and certainly expect, he will be hanged" (*Dumaresq MSS.*).

‡ Wellesley was in possession of a very complete survey of the district, with which Burrard had no acquaintance whatever.

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confidence or discern safety in the plan of the younger General. He shrank, rightly or wrongly, from the risk, and the troops were recalled. ANN. 1808.

Mortifying as this check must have been to a victorious army and their commander, yet they had done a good morning's work. They had completely defeated the Duc d'Abrantès and 14,000 of the best French troops;* a General, thirteen guns, and many hundred prisoners remained in their hands; their own loss being 720 killed and wounded, including 4 officers killed and 37 wounded. In his report to Sir Harry Burrard, Sir Arthur, after praising the superb conduct of his troops, made this remarkable observation: "I must add that this is the only action that I have ever been in, in which everything passed as it was directed, and no mistake was made by any of the officers charged with its conduct." †

Sir Harry Burrard's reign was brief. Before nightfall on the day of battle Sir Hew Dalrymple arrived and assumed the chief command. Although approving of Burrard's action in countermanding the advance, he moved the army forward to Ramalhal on the 22nd August, where the troops were suddenly called to arms on the appearance of a strong body of the enemy's cavalry. This, however, turned out to be no more than an escort to General Kellermann, who demanded an interview with Sir Arthur Wellesley in order to propose an armistice. The truth was that Junot, who had abandoned Torres Vedras and Mafra, had taken alarm at the state of affairs in Lisbon, where the populace, excited by the approach of the British, seemed on the eve of revolt. Kellermann was authorised to offer a convention under which the French should evacuate Portugal immediately. Sir Hew Dalrymple arrives in command.

* General Thiebault, who was present in the battle, has tried to prove that Junot had not more than 12,000 men at Vimeiro, and M. Thiers puts the force at 9,000. Both statements are disproved by the French *Ordre de Bataille* found on the field, where 14,000 men are accounted for, including 1,300 cavalry (*Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 206).

† *Despatches*, iv. 100.

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By Sir Hew's desire, Kellermann was conducted to his presence as Commander-in-chief. But forasmuch as Sir Hew had received none of the despatches which Wellesley had left at the Mondego for his information, and was therefore necessarily ignorant of a great deal essential to rightly understanding the position, he had not been long in conference with Kellermann before he sent for Sir Harry Burrard and Sir Arthur Wellesley to listen to the proposals of the French commander. After long deliberations,* an agreement was arrived at, and the instrument had to be signed. This was done by Wellesley, at Sir Hew's request, on the ground that, as it was signed by an inferior officer (Kellermann) on the French part, it would not be fitting that the British Commander-in-chief should affix his signature. The instrument was then submitted to Admiral Sir Charles Cotton for his approval, who took exception to the provision that the Russian fleet in the port of Lisbon should not be molested, but undertook to negociate separately on that matter. Cotton's reply was received at daylight on 25th August by Sir Hew, who thereupon asked Sir Arthur what he thought should be done. "Inform General Junot," was, in effect, Sir Arthur's reply, "that the Admiral disapproves of the armistice, and give him forty-eight hours' notice of its suspension. If Junot will not renew negociations independently of the Russians, then push forward and compel him to accept your own terms."

The Convention of Cintra.

Sir Hew did not act on the advice he had invited, although Sir John Moore's corps had arrived in Maceira Bay, raising the total British strength to 30,000. He sent, indeed, his Quartermaster-general, Colonel Murray, to inform Junot of the Admiral's objection, and to give forty-eight hours' notice of the resumption of hostilities, but he empowered him to

* "In the first interview I had with Sir Hew Dalrymple . . . I, who am supposed to have been his adviser, and am here now for no crime except my supposed advice, had reason to believe I did not possess his confidence: nay more, that he was prejudiced against the opinions I should give him" (Sir A. Wellesley's statement before the Court of Inquiry, *Despatches*, iv. 187).

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THE RIGHT HON. LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MURRAY, G.C.B., F.R.S., ETC.,
QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL OF THE BRITISH ARMY IN
THE PENINSULA.

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"enter upon and conclude" a treaty with the objectionable clauses left out. ANN. 1808.

Junot, with a beaten army, and in presence of the angry populace of Lisbon, was assuredly in no position to dictate terms. Leaving the Russian Admiral Siniavin to negociate with Cotton, he agreed to the convention, commonly, though erroneously, referred to as the Convention of Cintra, which was ratified on 30th August. By a separate transaction, Sir Charles Cotton received from the Russian Admiral the surrender of all his ships, to be held by Great Britain until six months after peace should be concluded, the officers and crews to be sent back to Russia in British vessels.*

Evacuation of Lisbon by the French.

The British troops, in accordance with the convention, took possession of Lisbon on 10th September, and of the citadel on the 12th, General Sir John Hope being appointed Governor. Junot and his staff embarked on the 13th; his army, to the number of 26,000 men, as shown in the official return, were conveyed in British ships to La Rochelle, and by the end of the month the only French troops left in Portugal were the garrisons of Elvas and Almeida.

It is worthy of note that Napoleon, expressing his discontent with Junot for his ill success, indicated as the course which he ought to have pursued, precisely that which Wellesley subsequently adopted on the same ground with complete success against Masséna.

"I wish to know why he (Junot) did not entrench himself in a camp at the mouth of the Tagus . . . and await assistance, having supplied his army. This is what he should have done by the rules of warfare in such a situation."

* "It would be highly gratifying to hear that Sir Hugh was hang'd, for it is rather provoking to think that we, through his stupidity, not only lost a great many men, but that we have, on account of the Russian fleet not being taken as prizes, lost two million guineas that were on board. But we must not think of this, as *honour* is the *only idea* a soldier can have in conquering, and it is well known that we have *plenty* of *money*, and that we *cannot* feel the loss of £200 or £300 pounds. The idea of prize money only is thought of by a sett of mersanaries (*sic*)" (*Dumaresq MSS.*).

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Political settlement of Portugal.

Military operations were now merged in political arrangements for the government of Portugal, and the latter were not in harmony with the designs Wellesley had kept in view. His correspondence at this period betrays an intense feeling of irritation against Sir Hew Dalrymple's conduct of affairs, both civil and military. To the Duke of Richmond,* Lord Castlereagh,† even to Sir John Moore,‡ and Capt. Malcolm, R.N.,§ he wrote expressing his disapproval of much that was going on. On 9th September Sir Hew Dalrymple proposed that Sir Arthur should go as plenipotentiary to Madrid. He replied, in terms not exactly submissive, that he could only undertake that mission if he enjoyed Sir Hew's full confidence, and on the assurance that any plan which he (Wellesley) might recommend should be carried into effect.

"The view which I have taken of the state of affairs in Spain has long ago suggested to me the propriety of placing in that kingdom a person of the description stated by yourself, possessing full powers, the means of exerting them on all parts of Spain, and of communicating and treating with all the local juntas of government. In order to perform the important part allotted to him, this person should possess the confidence of those who employ him; and, above all, in order that he may recommend with authority a plan to the Spaniards, he should be acquainted with those of his employers, the means by which they propose to carry them into execution, and those by which they intend to enable the Spanish nation to execute that which will be proposed to them. I certainly cannot consider myself as possessing those advantages, personally, which would qualify me for the situation you have proposed for me; and you must be the best judge whether you have made up your own mind, and are enabled to instruct me, and are inclined to confide in me to the extent which, in my opinion, will be necessary in order to derive any general advantage from such a mission." ‖

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 129, 132; *Despatches*, iv. 138.
† *Despatches*, iv. 118. ‡ *Ibid.*, 142. § *Ibid.*, 125.
‖ *Ibid.*, iv. 138.

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ANN. 1808.

Lord William Bentinck was eventually chosen by Sir Hew for this mission; and on 17th September Sir Arthur asked and obtained leave to return to England, to attend to his duties as Irish Secretary. He carried with him a gratifying tribute from the general officers who had served under him in the campaign, in the shape of a valuable piece of plate, and another from the field officers of his army. "We have but one sentiment," they said, "on the occasion—admiration of your talents and confidence in your abilities." *

Sir A. Wellesley returns to England.

Neither the British nor the Portuguese public shared this admiration and confidence. Although Sir Arthur was not responsible for the terms of the Convention of Cintra, and had repeatedly expressed his disapproval of some of them, the treaty had been signed by him on behalf of the British, and he incurred the chief share of the indignation that was poured out upon those who, it was believed, had thrown away all the advantage gained by the bloody victories of Roliça and Vimeiro, and allowed Marshal Junot to depart without further molestation from the kingdom which his soldiers had laid waste. The Junta of Oporto complained that the British Generals, commanding what was only an auxiliary force, had unwarrantably arrogated the right of treating for the Portuguese nation. Considering the part played in this brief campaign by General Bernardim Freire, who had withdrawn from co-operation with the British General at the most critical moment of advance against the enemy, the British Government might have been justified in disregarding the remonstrance of the Portuguese, albeit the patriotic efforts of the Junta had earned perhaps more consideration than they received in settling the terms of the evacuation. But the Government could not remain indifferent to the general clamour which arose in Britain when the terms of the convention were made known. The press led the way, demanding almost unanimously, and in many cases with extreme violence, that the Generals who had betrayed

Dissatisfaction caused by the Convention of Cintra.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 138.

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ÆT. 39. their country and its ally should be brought to justice. The public next took up the cry—

> "The blunt monster with uncounted heads,
> The still discordant, wavering multitude—"

and their voice found official reflection in the Speech from the Throne, wherein the Generals were blamed for "acceding to the terms of the convention."

It was all very unreasonable. He had been sanguine indeed, who, four months before, when the expedition sailed from Cork on 15th June, had predicted that before the end of harvest Sir Arthur Wellesley would have encountered in pitched battle the hitherto invincible troops of Napoleon, routed them, and driven the last French soldier out of Portugal. Not less than this had been done; yet, with one voice, the nation were demanding the trial of the successful commanders—if not for their lives, at least for their honour and professional prospects. Byron himself, scorning topographic accuracy, depicted the imaginary scene of Britain's humiliation—the palace of the Marchese Marialva at Cintra, although the treaty was really signed many miles from that place. The stanzas are well known;* not so well the more vindictive ones which stood in the original manuscript and were withdrawn at the earnest instance of the poet's friends.

> "But when Convention sent his handy-work,
> Pens, tongues, hands, feet combined in wild uproar;
> Mayor, aldermen, laid down the uplifted fork;
> The Bench of Bishops half forgot to snore;
> Stern Cobbett, who for one whole week forbore
> To question aught, once more with transport leapt
> And bit his devilish quill agen, and swore
> With foe such treaty never should be kept,
> Then burst the blatant beast † and roared and raged and slept!
>
> "Thus unto Heaven appealed the people; Heaven,
> Which loves the lieges of our gracious King,
> Decreed that, ere our generals were forgiven,
> Inquiry should be held about the thing.

* *Childe Harolde*, i. 24, 25, 26.

† "The blatant beast"—a term employed by Smollett to denote the mob.

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Viscount Castlereagh.
afterwards 2nd Marquess of Londonderry.

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ANN. 1808.

But Mercy cloak'd the babes beneath her wing:
And as they spared our foes, so spared we them;
(Where was the pity of our sires for Byng?)
Yet knaves, not idiots should the law condemn:
Then live, ye gallant knights, and bless your judges phlegm!"

Men of all parties were indignant; even Castlereagh, Sir Arthur's firmest friend, had misgivings. Wellesley, having no carriage of his own, asked him to carry him to one of the King's weekly levées. Castlereagh looked confused, said something about public ill-humour, and at last advised his friend not to attend the levée.

"When I first mentioned it," said Wellesley, "I only thought it a matter of respect and duty to the King; I now look upon it as a matter of self-respect and duty to my own character, and I insist on knowing whether this advice proceeds in any degree from his Majesty. I wish you distinctly to understand that I will go to the levée to-morrow, or I never will go to a levée in my life."

Castlereagh then withdrew his opposition. Sir Arthur attended the levée, was received cordially by the King, and had the satisfaction of seeing the representatives of the City of London present a petition praying for his own disgrace.*

Court of Inquiry on the Generals.

Nevertheless, no constitutional Government could withstand the general manifestation of anger among all classes. King George's Cabinet were compelled to take action; but, disregarding the ill-omened precedent of Admiral Byng, which Byron was not ashamed to quote, they set a new one of commendable procrastination. Instead of appointing a court-martial to decide on the main issue—the conduct of the Generals—they formed a court of inquiry to sift the facts which might be submitted to a trial.

This court assembled at Chelsea Hospital on 14th November, 1808, under the presidency of General Sir David Dundas,† Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Burrard having

* *Croker*, i. 344; *Stanhope*, 243.

† The other members of the court were Generals the Earl of Moira, Peter Craig, and Lord Heathfield; Lieut.-Generals the Earl of Pembroke, Sir G. Nugent, and Oliver Nicholls.

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Æt. 39. been recalled from Portugal to appear before it: Sir Arthur Wellesley being already in Dublin, attending to his duty as Irish Secretary. The chief matter submitted to this court was the conditions of the convention, but they were also called on to review "all the causes and circumstances (whether arising from the previous operations of the British army or otherwise) which led to them," as well as the conduct and proceedings of the Generals.

Wellesley, while making a spirited defence, and not disguising his disapproval of some of the details of the convention, admitted that he "concurred in and advised the adoption of the principle of the measure—namely, that the French should be allowed to evacuate Portugal," and that when he signed the instrument he considered he was doing it at the *desire* of his Commander-in-chief, and not at his *command*. The most interesting part of the proceedings, however, is that in which Sir Arthur defends himself against the charge of rashness in advancing against the enemy after landing at the Mondego, without waiting for the reinforcements which he knew were on their way to join him, and repeats his conviction that the British army should have moved forward immediately after the victory at Vimeiro, in order to occupy the position at Mafra and thus turn the defences at Torres Vedras.* In short, "had that been done," said Wellesley, "there would have been no need of concluding the convention which has given so much offence." While stoutly maintaining this opinion, Sir Arthur asked leave of the court to state that he believed Sir Harry Burrard had decided against the advance from Vimeiro "upon fair military grounds." † But he bitterly resented what he considered the unjust imputations cast on him by Sir Hew Dalrymple in his defence.

The court delivered their report on 22nd December: it was so vague in its conclusion that it was referred back for reconsideration. The seven members were divided. On

* *Despatches*, iv. 178. † *Ibid.*, 233.

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the 29th Wellesley received a private letter from Major Campbell,* containing a *précis* of the final judgment. By a majority of one the court had agreed to pronounce high encomium on Sir Arthur's operations up to and including the action at Vimeiro, refrained from pronouncing "whether or not a pursuit after the battle of the 21st could have been efficacious," and in face of Burrard's "weighty considerations" declined to determine "on the expedience [*sic*] of a forward movement to Torres Vedras." The court commented on the confusion caused by the rapid succession of three Commanders-in-chief within twenty-four hours, expressed approval of the advantages secured by the convention itself, and gave their opinion that no further military proceedings were necessary, "because, however some of us may differ in our sentiments respecting the fitness of the convention in the relative situation of the two armies, it is our unanimous declaration that unquestionable zeal and firmness appear throughout to have been exhibited by Lieut.-Generals Sir Hew Dalrymple, Sir Harry Burrard, and Sir Arthur Wellesley." The minority, consisting of Lords Moira and Pembroke, and General Nicholls, gave their reasons for dissent in a separate memorandum. ANN. 1808. Finding of the court.

Contradictory and inconclusive though this report was in its terms, it proved fatal to the professional prospects of two out of the three Generals arraigned. The King, in accepting it, repeated his disapproval of several articles in the convention, and sharply rebuked Sir Hew Dalrymple for delaying transmission of the armistice for the Royal approval from 22nd August till 4th September. Neither Sir Hew nor Sir Harry were ever employed again. Similar eclipse might have fallen upon Sir Arthur, but for the efforts of Castlereagh and other powerful friends, whose confidence in their General was never shaken.†

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 193.

† Mr. Gleig repeats without comment Brialmont's statement that "the judgment gave perfect satisfaction to Wellesley." This is hardly consistent

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By the time Parliament re-assembled in January, 1809, the public in general had forgotten their wrath about the convention, and thoughtful persons had begun to realise that, by the evacuation of Portugal, something substantial had been gained in the struggle with Napoleon. Wellesley defended his conduct in the campaign from his place in the House of Commons, and laid down an important principle regulating the action of officers to their superior.

"As to the letter sent by my noble friend (Castlereagh), desiring my superior officers to consult me particularly, had I been aware of the existence of such a document, I should have felt my situation very uncomfortable. But I must say that, from the first hour these officers landed, nay, even before they landed, I clearly perceived that I was not in possession of their confidence. I did everything, however, that I could to forward their objects, though I differed from them in opinion. This is what I consider to be the great distinction between military and civil inferior situations. If, in a civil office, the inferior differ materially from the superior, he ought to resign; but in military appointments it is the duty of the inferior officer to assist his commander in the mode in which that commander may deem his services most advantageous. . . . It is a principle on which, on that occasion, as I have ever done before, I acted, and on it I ever will act."

Both Houses of Parliament voted their thanks to Sir Arthur for the victories of Roliça and Vimeiro, and the cities of Londonderry and Limerick dissociated themselves from Irish sympathy with the French by presenting him with their freedom.

Looking back at this day upon the conduct of the first

with passages in Wellesley's correspondence at the time. For instance, writing to Lord Burghersh, 11th January, 1809, he says—

"The Report of the Court of Inquiry is indeed an extraordinary production. Opinions, like colours, are now matters of taste, and may in this view of them be inconsistent with each other. But a court of this description ought, if it touches facts, to state them correctly: and a principal member, if he observes upon the subject, ought not to pass unnoticed, or contradict, the principal fact bearing upon the question" (*Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 196).

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expedition to Portugal, one cannot but believe that, had Wellesley not been superseded, Junot's army must have surrendered, and the disastrous campaign of the following winter have had a very different issue. Such, at least, was the belief of Walter Scott, who, as is well known, had a keen eye for military combinations, and kept it on Wellington at this trying time, feeling in him a confidence which few, except those under his command, shared with Castlereagh himself. ANN. 1808.

"I cannot but feel exceedingly low," he wrote to Mr. Ellis on 23rd December, 1808. "I distrust what we call thoroughbred soldiers terribly, when anything like the formation of extensive plans, of the daring and critical nature which seems necessary for the emancipation of Spain, is required from them. Our army is a poor school for genius. . . . I would to God Wellesley were now at the head of the English in Spain. His late examination shows his acute and decisive talents for command; and although I believe in my conscience that when he found himself superseded, he suffered the pigs to run through the business, when he might in some measure have prevented them—

> 'Yet give the haughty devil his due,
> Though bold his quarterings, they are true.'

Such a man, with an army of 40,000 or 50,000 British, with the remains of the Galician army . . . might place Buonaparte in the precarious situation of a General with 100,000 enemies between him and his supplies. . . . I heartily wish our Generals would learn to play for the gammon, and not sit down contented with a mere saving game." *

Again, in writing to Southey on 31st January:—

"I fear it will be found that Moore was rather an excellent officer than a General of those comprehensive and daring views necessary in his dangerous situation. Had Wellesley been there the battle of Corunna would have been fought and won at Somosierra." †

* *Lockhart*, ii. 226. † *Ibid.*, 237.

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CHAPTER VI.

The Campaign of Talavera.

1808–1809.

September, 1808.	Napoleon sends reinforcements to the Peninsula.
December 4 . . .	He enters Madrid in person.
	Sir John Moore takes the field.
„ 23 . . .	He begins his retreat.
January 16, 1809.	Battle of Coruña.
„ 9	Treaty between Great Britain and Spain.
	The position in Portugal.
April 2	Sir A. Wellesley receives command of a second expedition to Portugal.
	Nature of his instructions.
„ 22	Arrives in Lisbon.
„ 27	Takes over the chief command.
	Position of the Spanish and French armies.
May 5	Sir A. Wellesley advances against Soult.
	Incident of the French Captain d'Argenton.
	Soult prepares to retreat from Oporto.
„ 12	Passage of the Douro and Capture of Oporto.
June 27	The British army advances from Abrantes towards Madrid.
	Forces opposed to their advance.
Appendix A. . . .	"The Marquis Romana."

ALTHOUGH the campaign of 1808 in Portugal failed to satisfy King George, his Cabinet, and his people, yet it convinced the Emperor of the French that Great Britain possessed some good troops, and at least *one* General who could handle them. To retrieve the first reverse which his

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army had yet encountered, he had recourse to the half-million or so of troops which were under arms to maintain the authority he had wrested from the Powers of Europe. In September, 1808, while English journalists were shrieking for the punishment of the General who had overthrown Marshal Junot, and were raking out into public view the private scandals of the Commander-in-chief, the Duke of York, Napoleon, having concluded a fresh alliance offensive and defensive with the Czar at Erfurth, collected a vast army, which he addressed in terms strangely in contrast with the unemotional phrases of a British general order. ANN. 1808.

Napoleon sends reinforcements to the Peninsula,

"Soldiers! I have need of you! The hideous presence of the leopard * contaminates the peninsula of Spain and Portugal. In terror he must fly before you. Let us bear our triumphant eagles to the Pillars of Hercules: there also we have injuries to avenge. . . . Soldiers! all that you have done, all that you will do, for the happiness of the French people, *and for my glory*, shall be eternal in my heart."

Simultaneously with the movement of 200,000 troops through the Western Pyrenees, Napoleon, as adroit in statecraft as in strategy, addressed a joint appeal with the Emperor of Russia to King George, to consent to peace for the sake of the suffering nations.

and appeals to King George.

"We entreat your Majesty—we unite to entreat your Majesty to listen to the voice of humanity; to silence that of passion; to seek, with the intention of arriving at pacification, to conciliate all interests, and thus, preserving all powers which exist, insure the happiness of Europe and of this generation, at the head of which Providence has placed us."

It was an adroit move, because, as the Opposition in Parliament took care should be proclaimed to the world, there was a strong peace party in England, actuated not by

* Alluding to the three leopards passant, the ancient arms of the Kings of England—not lions, as it has become the fashion to call them.

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ÆT. 39. sentimental and religious motives alone, but by prudential calculation of the futility of persevering in an unequal struggle. But Canning proved inflexible in loyalty to Spain, whose cause had been espoused by Great Britain. If the Spanish Government were acknowledged as a party to the negociation, then King George would be ready to treat on the basis of *uti possidetis;* but if the Emperors persisted in calling Joseph Buonaparte King of Spain, and the existing Government at Madrid rebels, negociations could go no further. They were broken off, and the world awaited the development of the scheme which surely lay behind the bold front of the British Cabinet. Amazing it is to record that, while Napoleon was calling out two conscriptions of 80,000 men each, and disposing his armies in Spain to throw open the road for his own advance on Madrid, no plan of operations had been matured, no definite instructions had been issued to Sir John Moore, who, on the removal of Dalrymple and Burrard, had become Commander-in-chief of the British forces in Portugal.

The outlines of the disastrous campaign of that winter must be given here in a few sentences. While Wellesley, still under the cloud of the Court of Inquiry, was manipulating patronage in the Chief Secretary's office, and writing about dirty bedding in Irish barracks, Soult was moving upon Burgos, where, on 10th November, he dispersed the army of Estremadura under the young Marquis of Belvedere; on the 11th Marshal Victor defeated Blake at Espinosa; Marshal Lannes routed Castaños and Palafox at Tudela on the 23rd; and on the 4th December Napoleon in person entered Madrid, which the Marquis de Castelar abandoned at his approach. Who could be surprised that Napoleon was confirmed in the belief, founded on repeated experience, that he had but to show himself in any quarter of Europe to receive the submission of its inhabitants? The Spanish insurrection, which would never have taken place had it been possible for him to have been in the country, was at an end: there

Napoleon enters Madrid.

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remained but those troublesome "leopards" to drive into the sea. ANN. 1808.

It seemed at first as if this would be a light task. It was not till November that Sir John Moore, acting under tardy orders from home, and in accordance with the urgent counsel of Mr. Frere, British Minister to the Central Junta, resolved to advance on the capital. "Resolved," perhaps, is scarcely the right term to express Sir John's action—"I mean," Southey quotes him as saying, "to proceed bridle in hand; for, if the bubble bursts, and Madrid falls, we shall have a run for it." He had the option of concentrating his army by a voyage round the coast, or by a march through the interior. Choosing the latter, he relinquished communication with Lisbon, crossed the Spanish frontier on 11th November, and on 13th was at Salamanca, awaiting the assembly of his various divisions and detachments, in all 30,000 foot and 5,000 cavalry—the largest force as yet employed by Great Britain in the Peninsula. While at Salamanca he heard tidings of the fall of Madrid. The Spanish armies—180,000 troops disposed between Zaragosa and the sea-coast—had ceased to have any military cohesion, and the British force was in the presence of 300,000 victorious French. Nevertheless, after much hesitation, and still influenced by Mr. Frere's earnest representations, Moore ordered the advance. He had been sent out, though against his own judgment,* to assist the Spaniards, and the utmost he could do now was to fall on the French communications and, by creating

Sir John Moore takes the field.

* Sir John Moore, though second to none in bravery, was oppressed with misgiving from the first. After he had received his final instructions from Lord Castlereagh and taken his leave, he re-opened the door and said to the minister, "Remember, my lord, I protest against the expedition and foretell its failure." Canning told Mr. Stapleton that when Castlereagh related this incident at a meeting of the Cabinet, he (Canning) could not help exclaiming, "Good God! and do you really mean to say that you allowed a man entertaining such feelings to the expedition to go and take command of it?" In consequence of this, a letter was sent to Sir John virtually demanding his resignation; but he only sent a dignified reply and sailed for Portugal (*George Canning and his Times*, by A. G. Stapleton, p. 159).

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a diversion, draw Napoleon away from the southern provinces.

Sir John Moore's retreat.

This purpose he certainly effected. When preparing to attack Soult at Saldanha, he heard that Napoleon was advancing by forced marches from Madrid at the head of 50,000 Guards. With less than 25,000 effectives in his command, Moore had no choice but to retreat. Fixing on Vigo as his port of embarkation, he fell back slowly, fighting daily and suffering frightfully from inclement weather and scanty supplies.

"Dost thou remember all those marches weary
From gathering foes to reach Coruña's shore?
Who can forget that midnight sad and dreary,
When to his grave we lower'd the noble Moore?"

The story is part of the history of the war, not of that of Arthur Wellesley, though it was closely interwoven with his fortunes in the years to come. The battle of Coruña and the death of Moore took place on 16th January, 1809; 14,000 worn and ragged soldiers, less than half the brave array that Wellesley had left near Lisbon, embarked for England, and so the curtain fell on the British first expedition to Portugal.

Sir A. Wellesley's opinion remains unshaken.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, however, whose intimacy with Canning and Castlereagh seems to have been almost the only tie which restrained these rivals from their proximate rupture, while it invested him with much influence upon their policy, was never shaken in his opinion that Portugal, with her long seaboard and a configuration which enabled an army to operate within her land frontiers on short lines of communication with her harbours, was the one base on which Great Britain could effectually operate against Napoleon. Despite the darkness of the prospect, Wellesley maintained that the right course was to subsidise the juntas, organise the national forces of Portugal under English officers (he did not yet know that the Spanish armies, so numerous on paper, were as bad as he had proved the Portuguese to be), and encourage the

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patriotic peasantry and townsmen by a liberal supply of arms and ammunition. Wellesley's counsel prevailed, the most cogent argument in support of his view being the certainty that, if the question was not fought out in the Peninsula, it would have to be decided with Napoleon's columns on British and Irish soil. On 9th January, 1809, a treaty of alliance was concluded between Great Britain and the provisional Government of Spain, and a new expedition was set on foot on a larger scale than hitherto. ANN. 1809. Treaty between Great Britain and Spain.

The prospect was threatening indeed. Soult was preparing to descend upon Oporto with 30,000 men, leaving Ney to suppress any movement in Galicia; Lefebre had driven one Spanish army before him to the Sierra Morena, Victor another into the mountains of Murcia. All these corps were now concentrating in a crushing movement upon the little kingdom in which the only British force was a detachment of 10,000 men left in Lisbon by Sir John Moore under Lieut.-General Sir John Cradock.* Weak as this was—far too weak to take the field against the invaders—its presence, and the uncertainty how soon it might be reinforced, acted as a check upon Marshal Soult after he seized Oporto on 29th March. His hesitation to advance at once upon Lisbon probably saved Portugal from total subjugation, but he feared the open door which that port held to England. Position in Portugal.

Early in March, General Beresford† was sent out to Lisbon, and, receiving the rank of marshal from the Portuguese Government, fixed his headquarters at Thomar and proceeded to remodel the Portuguese army. By the appointment of British officers and the establishment of British habits of discipline, he ultimately succeeded in transforming the disorderly levies into "an obedient, well-disciplined and gallant force." ‡

* Afterwards Lord Howden.

† Afterwards Viscount Beresford, a natural son of the first Marquess Waterford.

‡ *Napier*, ii. 147. Beresford's discipline was pretty drastic, and his stringency in revising the pay list was regarded at first as impious. He found that the

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On 2nd April, 1809, Sir Arthur Wellesley was appointed to command a fresh expedition to Portugal, and, resigning his seat in Parliament and his office as Chief Secretary, embarked at Portsmouth on the 16th, arriving in Lisbon on the 22nd.

Sir A. Wellesley leads a fresh expedition to Portugal.

The difficulty which Castlereagh had to overcome in securing the appointment of Sir Arthur to this command is singularly illustrated by a passage in a subsequent letter to him from George III. (Oct. 3, 1809)—

"Lord Castlereagh must remember that the King was not disposed to question the correctness of the representations made by the late Sir John Moore, which subsequent experience has so fully confirmed. And, although he was induced to yield to the advice of his confidential servants, he never could look with satisfaction to the prospect of another British army being committed in Spain, under the possible recurrence of the same difficulties. It was this impression which prompted the King to acquiesce in the appointment of so young a Lieutenant-General as Lord Wellington, to the command of the troops in Portugal; as he hoped that this consideration would operate with others against any considerable augmentation of that army; though that augmentation has been gradually produced by events not then foreseen."

The calm confidence with which Wellesley undertook his task was in striking contrast to the boding resignation of Moore, and was all the more encouraging to the Cabinet because Sir John Cradock, who succeeded to Moore's command, always kept in view and repeatedly referred to the contingency of evacuation, to which Wellesley only referred in his despatches when asked for an opinion about it.

By ancient constitutional usage, a General accepting a command in the field receives what is called a Letter of

name of its patron saint appeared in the list of officers in every regiment; that full pay was drawn for him and handed over to some religious house associated with his name. Needless to say that this solemn farce was put to a speedy end.

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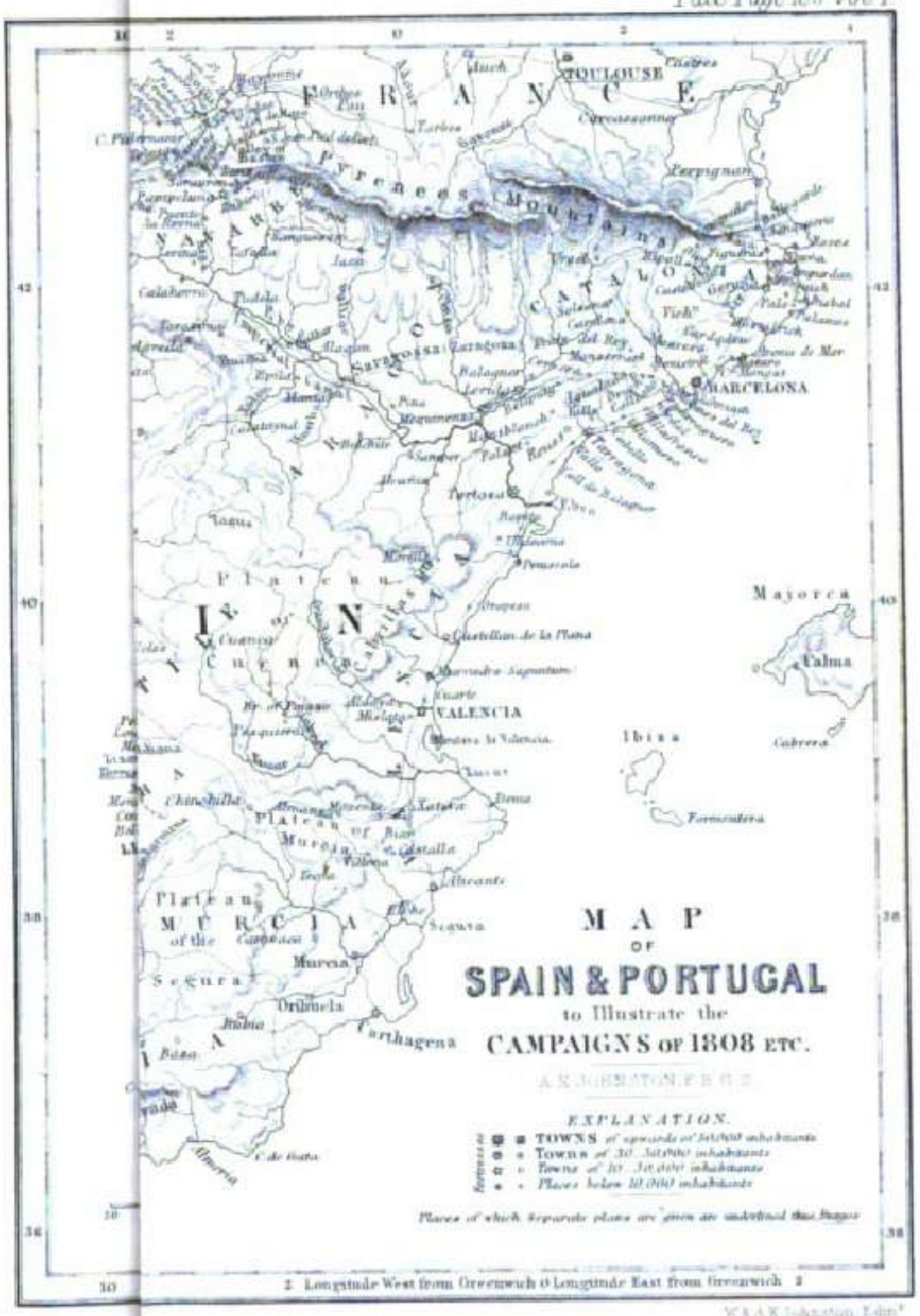

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Service, which begins by informing him "that the King has been graciously pleased to appoint him to command a detachment of his army," and goes on to direct him "to carry into effect such instructions as he may receive from his Majesty's ministers." Wellesley's instructions, in the tenour of which may be heard the echo of his own opinions, prescribed the defence of Portugal as the cardinal object of the expedition.* This fortified him in resisting the urgent desire of the Portuguese Regency that he should at once carry the war into Spain, with Cadiz and Gibraltar as bases, instead of the Tagus.

ANN. 1809.

Nature of instructions to the Commander of the Forces.

In sending out Wellesley to supersede Cradock in the presence of the enemy, the Horse Guards were re-enacting the policy which had caused so much confusion after the battle of Vimeiro. Wellesley, mindful of his own chagrin on that occasion, and determined not to be the instrument of discouragement to a brave officer, requested and obtained leave to exercise his own discretion, should he find on landing that Cradock was actively engaged.† It turned out, however, that, although Sir John had moved out as far as Leiria, preparatory to advancing against Oporto, the presence of Marshal Victor on the frontier of the Alemtejo threatened Lisbon and prevented a further advance. Wellesley, therefore, took over the chief command on 27th April, and Sir John proceeded to assume command of Gibraltar.

Position of the French and Spanish armies.

The position of the enemy at this time was as follows. Zaragoza, after a gallant defence, had fallen, and was in possession of Marshal Junot; Mortier's corps was moving into Old Castile; Marshal Victor's corps, 30,000 strong, occupied the Guadiana, with headquarters at Merida and advanced posts as far forward as Los Santos; Sebastiani's corps was at Ciudad Real, holding Venegas in check; Marshal Ney held Galicia; a detachment of French was in possession of Salamanca; St. Cyr's corps was in Catalonia, and General Kellermann commanded the 6th Corps in Valladolid. Soult,

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 210. † *Ibid.*, 221–226

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ÆT. 39. with 24,000 men, lay at Oporto, which he had captured on 29th March, and his advanced post held Ovar.

Of the Spanish, General Cuesta, having been defeated at Medellin on 29th March, was getting together a fresh army at Monasterio in the Sierra Morena; General Venegas lay further to the east in the Sierra Morena with some 12,000 men; the Marquis de Romana had retired with his corps into the Asturias.*

The Portuguese army had almost ceased to exist, but was being reorganised by Beresford at Thomars. Silveira had a force of Portuguese on the Tamega, Trant another on the Vouga, and there were always isolated bodies of *ordenancas* and insurgents more or less ready to act on French detachments and foraging parties.

The fortresses of Almeida, Ciudad Rodrigo, Elvas, Abrantes, Peniché, and Badajos were held for the Allies; while the presence of the British fleet off the coast ensured Wellesley's supplies.

The troops under command of Sir Arthur Wellesley on landing numbered 937 artillery, 1,870 cavalry, and 18,790 infantry—in all 21,597; while reinforcements were under orders to raise his strength to 30,000.

The British Cabinet shared the impatience of the public for something to be accomplished which should wipe out the recollection of Sir John Moore's misfortune; but ordinary readers of despatches or newspaper reports never can realise the position of a commander at the beginning of a campaign, especially in a foreign country. Their whole attention is fixed on the enemy, how he is to be attacked and defeated, and how his attacks are to be repelled. Of the pressing consideration

* Such is the disposition of the Spanish forces described by Wellesley in his memorandum of the campaign of 1809, written on 9th December (*Despatches*, v. 336). It is, however, exceedingly difficult to follow the movements of the Spanish armies: new ones were constantly being formed and dispersed as often as they came in contact with the French. As Wellesley afterwards used to say, whenever the Spaniards had an army, they had no General; and if, by chance, they had a General, there were no troops for him to work with.

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of base, communications and supply, they make little account, ANN. 1809.
although these must occupy the General's thoughts and foresight to a far larger degree than the other. The failure of a single day's rations may paralyse the energy of the finest force that ever was under arms; and however much arms of precision, and the use of railways and telegraphs may have modified the conditions of modern war, the maintenance of communications remains the paramount consideration in all strategy. No commander ever paid stricter attention to this than Napoleon, and his marshals were trained to form magazines and protect communications with the utmost vigilance; yet in one respect Wellesley found himself at a great disadvantage in entering upon a campaign against them. His magazines had to be filled by material purchased and paid for; his transport was conducted by animals disembarked or hired: at no time did his force enjoy the superior mobility secured by the French armies by their system of forced contributions. Wellesley drew his stores of bread-stuff from England; the French Generals ate up all the corn in a district, and then moved somewhere else. The British system was the more laborious and costly, and threw vastly more labour and anxiety upon the Commander-in-chief; nevertheless, Wellesley, when he had once established the system, derived from it these advantages, that it made him independent of seasons, and rendered him exempt from the obligation to shift his ground owing to the failure of local resources.

In deciding whether to attack Soult or Victor, or either of them, Sir Arthur well understood the importance of initial success. The divided state of public opinion in England was reflected in the Cabinet. A reverse to British arms would infallibly turn into a majority that partly factious, partly conscientious minority in Parliament which protested that Napoleon was invincible by land; the expedition would be recalled, and the policy to which Wellesley had pledged his professional credit would be abandoned. Intelligence which reached him of serious disaffection among Soult's officers,

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added to the importance of recovering the harbour of Oporto and the fertile province of Douro, decided him in favour of a northward movement. Detaching a division of infantry under General Mackenzie, and a brigade of heavy cavalry under General Fane, to guard the passages of the Tagus against any attempt by Victor, and directing detachments from the garrisons of Elvas and Badajos to act as corps of observation in that quarter, he desired General Cuesta to follow Victor in any forward movement he might make while the British army was engaged on the Douro. Concentrating the remainder at Coimbra, he found at his own disposal on 5th May 25,000 of all arms, namely, 13,000 British, 3,000 Germans, and 9,000 Portuguese.

Wellesley advances against Soult.

Here the French Adjutant-Major d'Argenton, a ringleader in the conspiracy against Soult,* sought a secret interview with Sir Arthur, who directed that he should be brought before him in such a manner as would give him the least favourable idea of the numbers, condition, and quality of the allied troops.† The prudence of this precaution became manifest in the end. D'Argenton, on returning to Oporto, was denounced by General Lefebvre, whom he reckoned on as a fellow-conspirator. On being brought before Marshal Soult, the culprit was offered a free pardon if he would reveal the names of his accomplices, and describe what he had seen in the British camp. The first he stoutly refused to do; the second he did willingly enough, but, thanks to Sir Arthur's foresight, the information was worthless—worse, it was misleading.‡

Incident of Captain d'Argenton.

* Many of his officers suspected Soult of a design to seize the crown of Portugal.

† *Despatches*, iv. 289.

‡ It would be curious if this traitor d'Argenton was akin in blood to the Norman Sir Giles d'Argentin who rode, with Pembroke, at Edward III.'s rein at Bannockburn. When the King and Pembroke turned to fly, he preferred to die, and, shouting—"Argentin! Argentin!" charged into the thick of Edward de Brus's column, and so perished. The modern d'Argenton escaped during Soult's retreat from Oporto and galloped into the British lines. Wellesley

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ANN. 1809.

The defeat on 27th April of Silveira's Portuguese on the Tamega, and the seizure by the French of the bridge at Amarante, interfered with Wellesley's project of strengthening that officer in order to intercept the line of Soult's retreat. The French army at this time was extended in detachments over a front of nearly forty miles between the Vouga and the Tamega, the wings being at an angle to each other, separated by the Douro, their only means of communication being the bridge of boats at Oporto. Soult, fully aware of the weakness of such a disposition, especially as Lapisse, by drawing southward to connect with Victor, had caused a break in the communication, made preparations to secure his retreat into Leon. He ordered every boat to be collected and brought across to the north bank, and, having made arrangements for the destruction of the pontoon bridge, calculated that his enemy advancing from the south would have to cross the estuary in his ships—a slow process which would allow him to evacuate at leisure. This he intended to do on the 12th, but the French Marshal fatally underrated the resources and vigour of him with whom he had to deal. Perhaps his vigilance had been lulled by the incapacity of Spanish Generals—perhaps he had not studied the incidents of Indian warfare. Had he done so he might have placed less reliance on the Douro as a defence against him who once had forced the passage of the Kistna in the face of 50,000 Marhattás.

Soult prepares to retreat.

sent him to England, where he was well treated and pensioned; but having crossed to France in disguise to fetch his wife, he was recognised, taken, and shot (*de Ros MS.*).

The Duke of Wellington bore high testimony in after years to the general integrity of French officers. Speaking on the subject to Lord Mahon in 1836, he said, "During the many years I was opposite to them, I never knew one engage in treacherous correspondence with us or sell us information." When Mahon reminded him of d'Argenton: "That was quite different. It was a conspiracy, not with the enemy, but as against his own form of government. When he came to me I told him that I should not alter my plans for his. I said, 'I shall attack you on such a day if I find you still in Oporto'" (*Stanhope*, 94).

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On 6th May Sir Arthur detached Beresford with 9,000 men to move by Viseu to Lamego, about forty miles above Oporto. The officer who had been entrusted with the conduct to and fro of the traitor d'Argenton, had kept his eyes open, and had noticed that the lake of Ovar, an inlet from the sea reaching twenty miles behind the French right, was left unguarded. Wellesley was prompt to seize this advantage. On the evening of 9th May, when Beresford had been given time to secure the passage of the Upper Douro, General Hill's division embarked in fishing-boats on the lake, and landed at daybreak on its northern shore, thus turning the French right. On the same day, the 10th, Marshal Beresford encountered General Loison, and, driving him back to Amarante, turned the French; while Sir Arthur, advancing by Albergaria, forced General Franceschi out of that place, and rested there that night, with his advanced guard at Oliveira. Advancing again on the 11th, Wellesley attacked Franceschi at Grijo, where he had formed a junction with General Mermet. The French retired, crossed the Douro in the night, and destroyed the pontoons behind them.

Soult, unaware of Loison's reverse, sent him urgent orders to hold the Tamega at all hazards, and continued to send off his baggage and heavy artillery to Amarante. With the deep and rapid Douro rolling between him and the British, he felt secure from danger in that quarter, although greatly disquieted by d'Argenton's conspiracy which had been discovered to him on the 9th.

Passage of the Douro by the British.

On the morning of 12th May, Sir Arthur Wellesley, ascending to the convent on the height of Serra, surveyed the city of Oporto on the further bank, and beheld the road to Vallonga covered with horses, baggage, and troops leaving the gates.* Had one of the French sentries, lounging on the

* The Duke of Wellington used to speak of the advantage which the excellence of Dollond's field-glasses gave him over French Generals, who were supplied with very inferior instruments. He was always restless till he could ascend some eminence and examine the country round. J. W. Croker relates

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Sketch Explanatory
OF THE PASSAGE OF THE RIVER DOURO,
by
SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY.
May 12th 1809.
AND OF THE STORMING OF OPORTO,
by
MARSHAL SOULT.
March 1809.

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ramparts, raised his eyes to the eminence on the south of the river, he might have recognised the uniform of British staff officers; but he scarcely could have divined that behind that hill lay the centre of the British line. Even had he done so, their presence on the far side of that bridgeless, boatless flood would not have been considered a serious menace; all Soult's attention was directed towards the river mouth, where he thought it not unlikely the British would arrive in ships. ANN. 1809.

Immediately opposite his position on the convent hill Wellesley saw on the further bank a large unfinished building called the Seminary, commanding all the ground near, and enclosed on three sides with a high wall, the fourth side being open to the river. Here, if he could only find boats, was the place to effect a landing, for the Seminary was left unguarded, and the approach from the south to the river at this point was screened by the height of Serra. Wings or boats—one seemed as easy to command as the other, for Soult had caused all the boats to be drawn to his own shore, although, either because his orders were disobeyed by disaffected subordinates, or neglected in the bustle of retreat, that shore lay without a guard.

The greatest Generals sometimes owe much to the humblest instruments; on this occasion—for ever memorable in military history—the instrument was a certain barber of Oporto who had escaped from the town in the night and sculled himself across the river. Of this the prior of Amarante seems to have informed Colonel Waters,* a staff officer, who discerned the golden opportunity; straightway this curious trio—the colonel, the prior, and the barber—were voyaging back to

how, posting one day with the Duke along the north road, they amused themselves by guessing what sort of country lay behind each successive hill they approached. Croker remarked that the Duke's guesses were much more accurate than his own, on which he replied, "Why, all my life I have been trying to guess what lay on the other side of the hill!" And again: "All the business of war, and indeed all the business of life, is to endeavour to find out what you don't know by what you do" (*Croker*, iii. 275).

* Afterwards Lieut.-General Sir John Waters, K.C.B.

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the enemy's shore. Nobody was on the outlook; by ten o'clock they had towed three empty barges across, in one of which an officer and five-and-twenty men of the 3rd Buffs embarked, and were safely landed in the Seminary. A second barge-load followed, and a third; then—strange to say not till then—the alarm was given, the drums beat to arms, and in a few minutes French troops of all arms were swarming round the Seminary, under command of Soult himself. The rattle of musketry on both sides was followed by the roar of guns directed against the enclosure. General Paget, commanding the party, fell severely wounded, to be replaced by General Hill *—Daddy Hill, as his devoted soldiers used to call him. While the Buffs were stiffly maintaining their lodgment, the barges plied merrily to and fro; soon the 48th, the 66th, a Portuguese battalion, and a battalion of detachments joined the first-comers—more than the enclosure would hold. Fourteen British guns on the south bank kept the left face of the Seminary clear of assailants, but ever Wellesley cast impatient glances up stream, whither early that morning he had sent Major-General John Murray † to seek for boats, and, if possible, to cross the river at Avintas. At last Murray's column appeared on the enemy's left flank, and, at the same moment, Lieut.-General Sherbrooke showed on the French left, having received the willing aid of the townspeople to carry his brigade of Guards over the ferry in the middle of the town. Upon this the French abandoned the attack on the Seminary and fled in disorder towards Amarante, pursued by two squadrons of light cavalry.‡ With the loss

Combat at the Seminary.

* Afterwards Field Marshal Viscount Hill.

† Not to be confounded with Major-General George Murray, quartermaster-general. Sir John Murray was tried by court-martial in 1813 for his abandonment of Tarragona.

‡ Napier (vol. ii. pp. 286 and 300) blames Murray severely for not having fallen upon the disorderly crowd flying across his front. "It was an opportunity that would have tempted a blind man to strike: the neglect of it argued want of military talent and hardihood." Lord Roberts, also (*Rise of Wellington*, p. 74), observes that Murray "failed to attack the French flank in conformity

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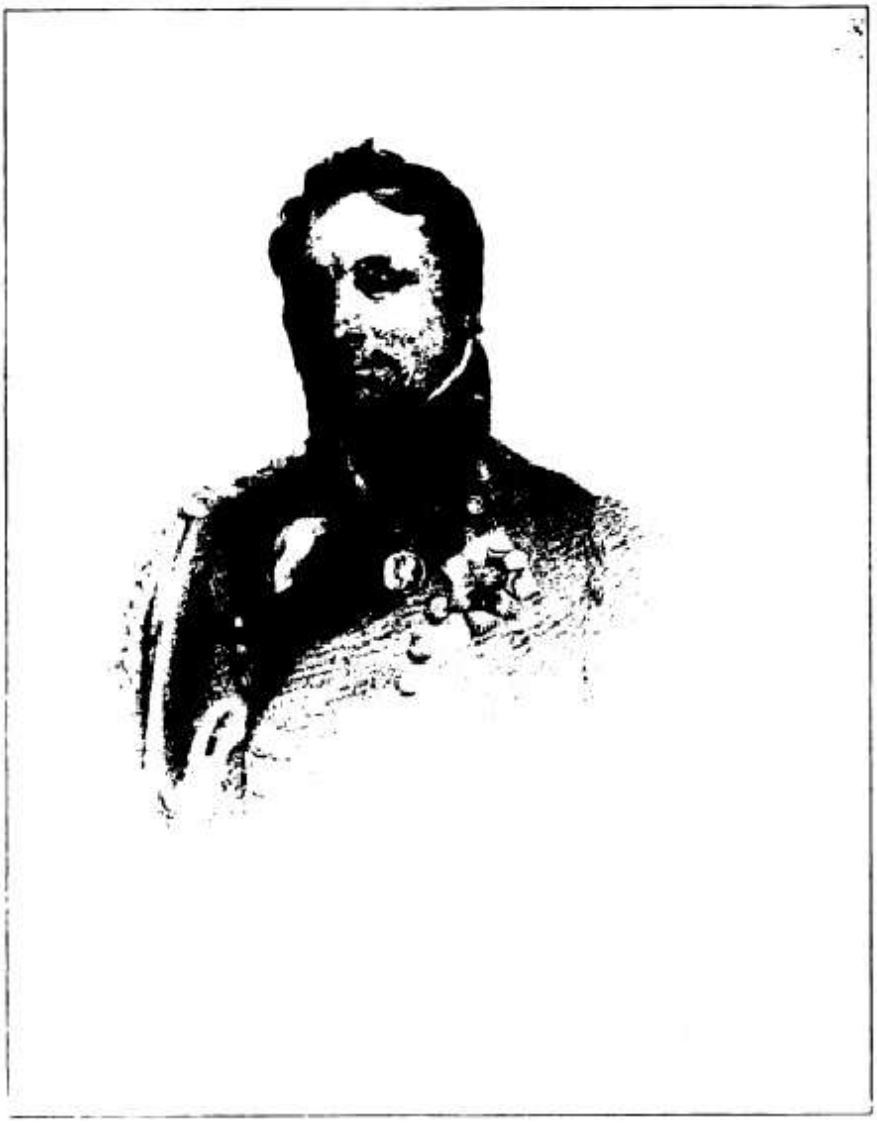

LIEUT.-GENERAL ROWLAND HILL,
AFTERWARDS FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT HILL, G.C.B.

Vol. i. p. 112.

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of 23 men killed, 17 officers and 115 men wounded, Sir Arthur had recovered possession of the second city in Portugal, and captured 58 of the enemy's guns. At four o'clock he sat down to eat the dinner which had been cooked for Marshal Soult. A fairly spirited performance—this famous *coup-de-main*—for a commander whom the French historian, Thiers, has described as "calculated only for the stolid operations of defensive war." ANN. 1809. Capture of Oporto.

To reach the Douro before Soult escaped from Oporto Wellesley's troops had marched eighty miles in four days, far outstripping their baggage and supplies. On the afternoon of the 12th, part of the army still lay on the south side of the river; moreover, Sir Arthur was unaware that at the very time he had been engaged at Oporto, Beresford had been handling his Portuguese levies to such good purpose that Loison's outposts at Amarante had been driven in, and that the French were on the point of evacuating that important position without attempting to defend it. The British, therefore, remained in Oporto during the 13th, General Murray being detached with the German Legion to hang on the rear of the French.

Soult, finding that Loison had failed to hold the Tamega at Amarante, and that his passage to the east was barred by Beresford, was forced into the mountain passes to the north. Unable to carry with him his guns and ammunition, he destroyed them at Penafiel, abandoned his baggage, and, guided by a Spanish pedlar, led his shattered forces through the Sierra Catalina to Pombeira. His retreat was one of terrible Sufferings of the retreating French.

with his instructions." Wellesley, however, seems to have been well content with Murray, for he mentioned him in despatches and thanked him in general orders for his "able movement which relieved the pressure on the British right at a critical moment." Again, in a private letter to the Duke of York, who was no longer Commander-in-chief, he says, "The movement of General Murray upon the flank was decisive of the whole position" (*Despatches*, iv. 305). Further, in writing to Murray on 10th September, Wellesley said, "I regret that you were not with us at Talavera; your presence would have been most useful" (*Ibid.*, v. 138).

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suffering. A storm of wind and rain began on the 13th and lasted several days; numbers of his stragglers and wounded were murdered by the country people. Six months had not run since he entered Portugal with 25,000 men in pursuit of Sir John Moore; of these not more than 19,500 mustered at Pombeira; of fifty-eight guns he had lost or destroyed every one.

The British advance.

On 14th May Wellesley moved forward in two columns upon Braga; on the 16th he touched Soult's rear-guard at Salamonde; but the enemy travelled light without guns or baggage, and on the 18th Wellesley turned southward, having information that Lapisse had driven the Portuguese garrison out of Alcantara, and crossed the Tagus. Arriving at Coimbra on the 26th, he found that Lapisse had withdrawn once more into Estremadura, and the British moved by easy marches to Abrantes, where they arrived in the second week in June. Their condition at this time was far short of satisfactory. The weather continued very inclement and wet; the shoes of the infantry had worn off their feet; meat was plentiful, but bread was scarcely to be had; no money had arrived, pay was heavily in arrear, and insubordination began to show itself among the troops. Their General had nothing but praise for the conduct of his soldiers in action: "I cannot say too much in favour of the officers and troops," * he had written to Castlereagh after the capture of Oporto; but a few days later he was complaining bitterly to the same minister of their behaviour:—

"The army behave terribly ill. They are a rabble who cannot bear success any more than Sir John Moore's army could bear failure. I am endeavouring to tame them; but if I should not succeed, I must make an official complaint of them, and send one or two corps home in disgrace. They plunder in all directions."†

General orders were frequent on the subject of straggling and plundering. To check these practices Sir Arthur ordered

* *Despatches*, iv. 300. † *Ibid.*, iv. 352.

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that an officer of each company should visit his men in their quarters four times a day, commanded the roll to be called in each regiment once an hour, or caused the men to be kept under arms from sunrise to sunset. ANN. 1809.

"The people of Portugal deserve well of the army; they have in every instance treated the soldiers well; and there never was an army so well supplied, or which had so little excuse for plunder, if any excuse can in any case exist. But if the Commander of the Forces should not by these and other measures be enabled to get the better of these practices, he is determined to report to his Majesty, and send into garrison those corps who shall continue them; as he prefers a small, but disciplined and well ordered, body of troops to a rabble, however numerous; and he is resolved not to be the instrument of inflicting upon the people of this country the miseries which result from the operations of such a body."

Difficulty with the Spanish generalissimo.

Sir Arthur Wellesley's real difficulties began when he attempted to combine operations with Cuesta. The Spanish Commander-in-chief by the beginning of June had not less than 38,000 men, including 7,000 cavalry. When Victor had withdrawn from Estremadura, Cuesta had occupied Merida, and Venegas had increased his force in the province of Toledo to 18,000. The Marquis of Romana, whom Napoleon had been careful in his early dealings with Charles IV. to get away from Spain with the best troops in the army, and canton them in Holstein, was back in Galicia with 15,000 men. The moment seemed favourable to a combined movement upon Spanish territory, but every suggestion of Wellesley's was objected to by Cuesta, who had impracticable ideas of his own. Other circumstances, however, rendered the British army immovable at Abrantes. No money had arrived, and horses were deficient. On 11th June the troops were nearly two months in arrear of pay, and half the cavalry were dismounted. "When horses," Wellesley wrote to Castlereagh, "as well as men, are new in

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war, I believe that they are generally the sacrifice of their mutual inexperience."

The British advance resumed.

On 27th June, money having at last come to hand and reinforcements having been reported in the offing, the British army broke up from Abrantes, Sir Arthur having fallen in with Cuesta's plan for an advance on Madrid by the valley of the Tagus. General Vanegas, reinforced to 25,000 strong, was directed to co-operate by moving north to Arganda by 22nd July, the day appointed for the arrival of the allied forces at Talavera. Napoleon was deeply engaged at this time in the war with Austria; nevertheless he kept a watchful eye on affairs in the Peninsula, for on 12th June he wrote from Schönbrunn to Marshal Soult, who had reorganised his corps far sooner than Wellesley was aware or had believed possible, directing him to concentrate the 2nd, 5th, and 6th Corps, and, passing the mountains, to fall on Wellesley's flank and rear as he moved up the Tagus, and destroy him. These three corps contained 48,662 effective infantry and artillery, and 5,203 cavalry; the 1st and 4th Corps, General Desolle's division and the King's French Guards, amounting to 49,235 foot and 8,900 horse, covered Madrid under command of King Joseph. In Aragon was the 3rd Corps under General Suchet—15,226 foot and 2,604 horse; in Catalonia Marshal Augerau had the 7th Corps—30,000 infantry and 2,500 cavalry. Add to these 5,200 infantry and 2,200 cavalry on independent detachments, and the total effective force in front of the Allies, not including sick, stragglers, garrisons, and lines of correspondence, consisted of 144,706 infantry and 29,207 cavalry.* Against this formidable host the allied Generals had decided to advance with 23,000 British and 56,000 Spanish troops, Marshal Beresford's Portuguese having been detached to guard the north frontier of Portugal. When Wellesley, however, decided to expose his left flank by marching up the Tagus to join Cuesta at Plasencia, he reckoned on Soult's beaten army being behind the mountains

Forces opposed to the advance of the Allies.

* Figures supplied to Sir W. Napier by Marshal Soult.

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to the north, and relied for protection against it upon Beresford and the Duque del Parque, who had 20,000 Portuguese between them. He was not aware that the 6th Corps lay at Astorga under Marshal Ney, nor that the 5th Corps was at Valladolid. ANN. 1809.

APPENDIX A.

The Marquis Romana.

The Duke of Wellington gave the following interesting account of the escape from Denmark of the Marquis Romana, for whom he always entertained a very kindly feeling:—

"The French had taken good care as soon as they were masters of the Government in Spain, to march off the best of the troops under the Marquis of Romana, and canton them in Holstein. It was a great object, of course, to recover this army from them after the Spaniards had thrown off their yoke, and, Admiral —— having been duly warned to give his prompt assistance for their escape, when called upon, a plot was laid accordingly. There was a certain Scotch priest named Robertson, whom I had found very useful to me while Secretary in Ireland for procuring intelligence, and this man appeared to me so well fitted by his discretion and courage for such an enterprise, that I recommended the Government to employ him to communicate with Romana, which accordingly he undertook. Great difficulties were, however, to be expected. Robertson was quite unknown personally to Romana, and to carry any written credentials would have been far too great a risk, because the French had organised a most severe system of police towards strangers in the north of Germany, and had besides surrounded Romana with spies and observers, who necessarily watched all his proceedings. After much discussion upon this matter, a method was at length discovered for enabling Robertson to convince Romana that he was charged with a political mission to him, without its being necessary for him to incur the danger of carrying written credentials. It

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ÆT. 40. occurred to the recollection of Mr. Frere, our Minister to Spain, that in former days of intimacy with Romana at Madrid, he being a great admirer of Spanish poetry, for which Romana had also a passion, they used sometimes to write verses to each other in a sort of literary correspondence.

"Mr. Frere perfectly recollected one favourite composition in this way to which each had contributed his share, and felt sure that Romana would also have retained it equally well in his memory. He immediately committed this piece of poetry to paper, and made Robertson learn it accurately by heart. He also was made to learn by heart the whole of his instructions, with the order for Romana to return to Spain, and the directions for communicating with the English Admiral who was to bring away the Spanish troops under his command.

"Being perfect in his lesson, Robertson was privately landed on the Continent, and made his way without much difficulty to Romana's quarters in Holstein; but here he found himself absolutely at a loss how to obtain an interview private enough to enable him with any safety to open upon his business. He at length contrived to get some very fine chocolate, for which he knew the fondness of all Spaniards. Introducing himself gradually among Romana's servants and staff as a vendor of this article, so that he had frequent access to his house, before many days he had the luck to meet Romana alone in a corridor of the hotel. He instantly made up to him, and in a low voice repeated the verses he had learned. The General could not at first conceive what the stranger meant, but presently perceiving by his manner that there was more in it than appeared, and recollecting at the same time the circumstances connected with the verses he repeated, he hastily dismissed him with an appointment for next day in a more safe and private place. At this appointment Robertson laid open his mission, which Romana received with joy; and, so well did Robertson contrive his communications for him with the British Admiral, within a very short time the Spanish army suddenly broke up from their quarters with such secrecy and good order that they all got on board the fleet without losing a man. Robertson received the fair reward of his courage and discretion, and was well provided for by the British Government.

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As for Romana, he was an excellent, honourable man, but had no military skill" (*de Ros MS.*). ANN. 1809.

"Romana," the Duke told Lord Mahon, "was a good-natured, excellent man, most easy to live with, and very clever, too—knew all about the literature and poetry of his country more than any Spaniard I ever knew, but he knew nothing of troops at all. I never in my whole life saw a man who had acted with troops at all understand so little about them. I liked him very much—he died in my arms—at least I was in the room at the time; but as to his generalship——!"*

* *Stanhope*, 10, 23.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE CAMPAIGN OF TALAVERA—(*continued*).

1809.

1809. The expeditions to Walcheren and Southern Italy.
Lavish expenditure on the war by the British Government.
June 27 . . . . The British army advances from Abrantes.
Difficulties of the British.
July 27 . . . . Narrow escape of the Commander of the Forces.
„ 27, 28 . . Battle of Talavera.
King Joseph holds a council of war.
The Marshals disagree.
Renewal of the combat.
Fine charge of 23rd Light Dragoons.
Impetuosity of the Guards.
Steadiness of the 48th Regiment.
Retreat of the French.
July 29 . . . . Forced march of the Light Brigade.
August 1 . . . Dangerous situation of the Allies.
„ 3 . . . The British and Spanish armies separate.
„ 4 . . . Wellesley crosses the Tagus, and commences his retreat.
„ 11 . . Defeat of Wilson at Puerto de Baños, and of Venegas by Sebastiani.
September . . The British go into cantonments at Badajos.
„ 4 . Sir Arthur Wellesley receives a peerage.

Appendix B. "The conduct of the Spanish armies."

KING GEORGE'S Cabinet abated none of the ardour with which they had embarked on the mortal struggle with Napoleon. When one reflects on the avidity shown by most ministries for popular applause, when one considers how sensitive they usually are to public displeasure or the

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murmurs of their own followers, one can only admire the constancy with which the Duke of Portland's colleagues, when once Canning and Castlereagh had persuaded them to adopt the great project bequeathed by Pitt to his countrymen, adhered to it, in spite of vehement and unscrupulous opposition. They had been slow and hesitating at first— ANN. 1809.

> "Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
> Bear 't that the opposed may beware of thee;"

nor were they all of one mind about the best means of exerting their power. The Convention of Cintra had left a root of bitterness between the heads of the Foreign Office and the War Office—Canning and Castlereagh. The first was for concentrating the whole military force of the nation upon the Peninsula;* the other was for creating diversions at other extremities of the French empire.

Liberal expenditure by Britain on the war.

Castlereagh had his way. The most powerful expedition that had ever left the shores of England—40,000 troops and a magnificent fleet with as many seamen and marines—was despatched to attack Antwerp; and, simultaneously, a force of 12,000 British were withdrawn from Sicily and landed in Southern Italy, which Napoleon had stripped of troops in order to operate on the Austrian frontier.

The Italian expedition was no worse than fruitless; the invasion of Holland proved a lamentable, disastrous failure.

Historians, in wearisome iteration, with the irresponsible sagacity born of elbow-chair retrospect or the contracted view of professional prepossession, have denounced the policy and the measures which proved so fatally void of fulfilment. They have ransacked their vocabulary to find terms forcible enough to describe the "direful, ministerial incapacity," the "military foolery," the "glaring proofs of improvidence,"† which wasted men and money which might have been applied to better purpose. The Sicilian contingent certainly might have been used in the south of Spain to better effect than

* *Stapleton*, 172. † *Napier*, ii. 351, et passim.

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Æt. 40. in Italy; but the invasion of Holland was well designed to embarrass Napoleon in his war with Austria. Castlereagh erred, not in his conception, but in his choice of a General. They were not all embryo Wellingtons, in those days, who wore cocked hats; and, as the result proved, the lustre of Lord Chatham's historic name was sadly tarnished by the incapacity he displayed in the inglorious but deadly inaction of Walcheren.

All Castlereagh's critics have assumed that, at the time Lord Chatham's army sailed for Antwerp, Wellesley was in dire straits for reinforcements. He was nothing of the kind. Of money, indeed, he stood badly in need at times, but not because of the parsimony of Parliament; of that vice, at least, the British Government must be freely acquitted. Besides maintaining her own forces by sea and land, Great Britain, in accordance with Wellesley's repeated advice, was heavily subsidising the Juntas, besides supplying them with arms, stores, and clothing to the value of many millions sterling. Remittances to the army in Portugal were inconveniently unpunctual, but they always were sufficient in the end to defray all liabilities.

The expeditions to Walcheren and Southern Italy.

As for troops—God knows there were enough troops in the Peninsula, aided by a population hostile to the French, to have cleared the country of invaders in a single season. Had the quality of Spanish troops proved anything in proportion to their quantity, Wellesley would have had no weakness to fear in point of numbers. His own opinion on this subject seems to have been overlooked hitherto; yet, seeing how largely the Peninsula expedition was the outcome of his advice to ministers, that opinion is not unworthy of consideration.

To Viscount Castlereagh.

"Merida, 25th August, 1809.

"It may be satisfactory to you to know that I do not think matters would have been much better if you had sent your large expedition to Spain instead of to the Scheldt. You could not

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have equipped it in Galicia or anywhere in the north of Spain. ANN. 1809.
If we had had 60,000 men instead of 20,000, in all probability we should not have got to Talavera to fight the battle, for want of means and provisions. . . . Besides, you will observe that your 40,000 men, supposing them to be equipped and means to exist of feeding them, would not compensate for the deficiency of numbers, of composition and of efficiency in the Spanish armies; and that if they had been able to remove the French from Madrid, they could not have removed them from the Peninsula, even in the existing state of the French force." *

It is true that in 1810, when Wellington was driving Masséna before him, he did feel the want of more reinforcements than could be sent to him, and it is natural that Sir William Napier, from an exclusively military standpoint, should have employed harsh terms against a Government to which, in party politics, he was bitterly opposed because it could not produce these reinforcements exactly at the right moment. But it is inexcusable in historians who have, or ought to have, a clear view of the difficulties surrounding ministers, to repeat in servile monotony these charges of weakness and apathy against men whose resolute courage sustained them under the invective of the Opposition and the distrust of many of the people. Blunders! of course they blundered; so did Wellington in some of his combinations; but nobody recognised more cordially than he the support he received from the British Cabinet.

"I have always," he wrote to Lord Mahon in 1836, "in public as well as in private, declared my obligations to the Government for the encouragement and support they gave me, and the confidence with which they treated me. . . . There was a formidable

* Many years later the Duke of Wellington told C. Greville that he considered the Walcheren expedition well planned as a diversion, but wretchedly executed (*Greville*, part i. vol. iii. 271). Ministers did their part, but Castlereagh erred in his choice of a General. Lord Chatham was the only member of the Government who was dissatisfied that Sir Arthur was not brought to a trial (*Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 402).

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ÆT. 40. Opposition in Parliament, which opposed itself particularly to the war in the Peninsula. . . . I was not *the* Government, as the Duke of Marlborough was. . . . It would not be fair to compare the conduct of the Government of the Regency in the war which I conducted with the conduct of the Government in the reign of Queen Anne. I cannot and never have complained of them; and I should not like to say [he had been quoted as having said so] that I 'supported the Government more than they supported me.' In one sense it is true. It is quite certain that my opinion alone was the cause of the continuance of war in the Peninsula. My letters show that I encouraged, nay forced the Government to persevere in it. The successes of the operations of the army supported them in power; but it is not true that they did not, in every way in their power—as individuals—as ministers—and as a Government—support me." *

Frank testimony like that ought to silence the stupid clamour against the Portland and Perceval administrations for the conduct of their heroic enterprise.†

Still, it may be urged, reinforcements did *not* arrive when they were most needed in 1810. Let Lord Liverpool, who succeeded Castlereagh at the War Office in that year, speak in his own defence.

The Earl of Liverpool to Viscount Wellington.

"2nd August, 1810.

". . . Now with respect to reinforcements to your army, I am under the painful necessity of informing you that the effects of the fever contracted by our army last year at Walcheren are still of that nature that, by a late inspection, we have not at this time a single battalion of infantry in Great Britain and Ireland reported fit for service in the field, with the exception of the infantry of the Duke of Brunswick's corps. This circumstance is rendered the more distressing from the situation in Ireland, which is more

* *Stanhope*, p. 82.

† Napier reserves his harshest invective for Perceval: the Duke of Wellington told Greville that he always thought Napier unfair to that minister (*Greville*, part i. vol. iii. 271).

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alarming, as far as respects internal discontent, than I have ever yet recollected it; and not a mail arrives from thence which does not bring requisitions from the Duke of Richmond and Pole for reinforcements of troops. Notwithstanding these difficulties we are, however, determined to send you the infantry of the Duke of Brunswick's corps, which are at present in Ireland, as soon as they can be relieved by regiments from hence. There are actually on passage, or embarked, about 1,300 men as drafts for the regiments now in Portugal; and there can be no doubt that by this time the 7th Regiment from Halifax, consisting of 920 men, is arrived at Lisbon." * ANN. 1809.

A few months later, 21st March, 1811, Wellington wrote to ask Lord Liverpool whether he wished regiments sent back to England in consequence of the enemy's retreat,† to which Lord Liverpool replied by asking Wellington's opinion about what was required for future operations. ‡

This is somewhat of anticipation, but not immaterial to the right understanding of Wellesley's position in the Peninsula in 1809. Returning to the summer of that year:—on 27th June Wellesley marched from Abrantes with 21,000 men, having intelligence that 8,000 more lay off the Rock of Lisbon.§ Moving by the north bank of the Tagus, the army reassembled at Plasencia on 10th July, by which time General Cuesta had crossed the Tagus at Almaraz, and Marshal Victor, in obedience to King Joseph's orders, had fallen back to Talavera, distant from Plasencia about sixty — from

Advance of the British army into Spain.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 568.

† *Despatches*, vii. 375.

‡ *Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 104.

§ Thus Napier (ii. 356); but on 30th June Wellesley wrote from Castello Branco to Castlereagh: "Nothing is more fallacious than a return such as you have sent me. It contains an enumeration of no less than eleven battalions not arrived, of two gone to Gibraltar, and of two (the detachments) ordered home, and of the 20th Light Dragoons, ordered and gone by this time to Sicily; and it omits, on the other hand, two battalions, the 48th and 61st, gone to Gibraltar. . . . According to your account I have 35,000 men; according to my own I have 18,000, and the public will not be satisfied either with you or me, if I do not effect all that 35,000 men are expected to do" (*Despatches*, iv. 449).

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Æt. 40. Almaraz about forty—miles. At the same time Joseph, nervous for the safety of Madrid, took away one of Victor's divisions of infantry and his light cavalry, and deprived him of the support of the 5th Corps, by ordering it to Avila instead of Salamanca, whither Napoleon had directed it to proceed. Victor was thus left exposed with no more than 14,000 men; while Cuesta, with 38,000, advanced to Oropesa, within a day's march of his flank. Victor's safety, however, was found in Cuesta's ignorance; for, on a demonstration by the enemy's cavalry, the Spanish army withdrew to Almaraz without striking a blow.*

Although Sir Arthur Wellesley had been appointed generalissimo of the Portuguese army, he had no authority over the forces of Spain, and Cuesta's assent to a plan of campaign had to be obtained. This was done on 11th July, when Cuesta agreed to order General Venegas, before whom Sebastiani was retiring, to move from the south with 18,000 men by Ocaña to Arganda near Madrid, while the allied forces advanced to Talavera. Marshal Beresford was to act in the neighbourhood of Salamanca with his 15,000 Portuguese, while Sir Robert Wilson, with the Lusitanian Legion, observed the line of Victor's retreat from the neighbourhood of Escalona. Of this programme, as will be seen, Venegas failed to perform the important part allotted to him.

Difficulties of the British.

Meanwhile, the difficulties of the British force had become exceedingly serious. As long as they were on Portuguese territory, transport and provisions were forthcoming readily enough, and the inhabitants were friendly and helpful. But the Portuguese drivers would not leave their own country, and in Spain, despite the profuse assurances of the Juntas, not only did the alcaldes fail to fulfil contracts for provisions, but neither horses, mules, nor carts were forthcoming, although all services were to be liberally paid for. On 16th July, therefore, Sir Arthur wrote to the Spanish Quartermaster-General O'Donoju, announcing his resolution to undertake

* *Napier*, ii. 359.

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no further operations in Spain after the work immediately in hand should have been completed—namely, the defeat of Marshal Victor.* As Sir Arthur afterwards explained, he felt that he ought probably to have determined to suspend all operations till the army should be supplied with the means it required; but loyalty to Cuesta, and anxiety not to compromise Venegas, induced him to persevere beyond the limits of prudence. ANN. 1809.

By 21st July, when the Allies lay between Oropesa and Velada, Victor had been reinforced to the strength of 25,000, and lay on the river Alberche with outposts in Talavera-de-la-Reyna. On the 22nd Cuesta touched the enemy's rear-guard at Gamonal, which afforded Sir Arthur his first experience of the quality of his ally. Two thousand French cavalry sufficed to arrest the advance of 15,000 Spanish infantry, with artillery and 3,000 cavalry, while the French main body took up a strong position on rising ground beyond the Alberche. That afternoon some British officers crossed the Tagus, and from the mountains on the south bank, took accurate note of the disposition and strength of the enemy. Wellesley desired to attack next morning (23rd), and his troops were under arms at 3 a.m., but the Spaniards were not afoot till seven, when Cuesta declined to do anything that day.† Later, however, when the French were withdrawing their guns and appeared about to move, he consented to go

* *Despatches*, iv. 486, 499, 500, et passim. Victor was distinguished by a round and very red face, which earned for him from the army the nickname of *Beau Soleil*. When Napoleon created him Duc de Bellune, the wags approved, saying, "D'un beau soleil l'empereur a fait une belle lune."

† *Not* because it was Sunday. In 1833 the Duke told Lord Mahon that this story, told by Brialmont and Napier, and repeated by almost every English writer who has described the battle of Talavera, was not true. "Cuesta," said Wellington, "made many other foolish excuses, but that was not one of them." He went on to say that Cuesta "did not want courage nor sense either, but was an obstinate old man and had no military genius—none of them have. If he would have fought when I wanted him at Talavera, I have no hesitation in saying it would have been as great a battle as Waterloo, and would have cleared Spain of the French for that time" (*Stanhope*, pp. 46, 47).

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Æt. 40. with Sir Arthur to examine the enemy's position. A strange group they must have made—the British General mounted—his aged ally in a *coche de collera* drawn by six horses! * There intercourse was rendered unsatisfactory by General Cuesta's patriotic objection to speak French, while Wellington, though he understood it, could not converse in Spanish.†

Cuesta, after his survey, agreed to attack early next morning; but this intention, like every other project of the Allies at this time, was promptly disclosed to the enemy, who withdrew in the night to Torrijos, being uneasy about the movements of Sir Robert Wilson's legion on his rear.

Every day thus gained to the French by Victor's skilful movements, by Cuesta's inveterate slowness, and by Wellesley's deficiency in transport, was of enormous moment—had Sir Arthur known what was brewing he must have retraced his steps to Portugal without delay. He was not aware that Soult had received orders from King Joseph to advance from Salamanca on 24th July with the 2nd, 5th, and 6th Corps, so as to arrive at Plasencia on the 29th, thus cutting off the British from their base, while troops were being hurried up from Madrid to support Victor. Neither did he know that the Supreme Junta, who disliked Cuesta, had countermanded Venegas's advance from the south. What Wellesley did know was that 250,000 rations contracted for with the alcaldes of Plasencia and other villages had not been delivered, that his troops were already on half rations, that the sum of profuse apologies and flowery promises spelled something perilously like starvation. Accordingly, he informed Cuesta that, until supplies were forthcoming, the British could undertake no active operations.

As soon as he heard this, Cuesta, whom no persuasion could stir from his camp on Sunday, was all impetuosity on

* The Duke told Mahon that Cuesta always moved in a coach and six, except when actually engaged with the enemy, when he mounted a horse. Places where his coach could not go he simply left unviewed (*Stanhope*, p. 46).

† *Despatches*, iv. 478.

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Tuesday, and moved out against the enemy. Wellesley, to keep his communication, threw two infantry divisions and a brigade of cavalry, under General Sherbrooke, across the Alberche. The Spaniards, however, did not go far. Pursuit of Napoleon's Marshals was a venture at no time other than hazardous. The French cavalry attacked Zaya's division, which retired in confusion; and although a general panic was averted by an effective charge of Albuquerque's horse, and by the steadiness of Sherbrooke's brigades, the Spaniards lost about 4,000 men. ANN. 1809.

Wellesley now besought Cuesta to resume his position about Talavera. The Spaniard was obdurate, but when Sir Arthur, who knew the disadvantages of the position his Allies had taken up, ordered Sherbrooke to retire, and the French cavalry began to show at the same time, Cuesta sullenly consented, declaring to his staff that "he had made the Englishman go on his knees for it," and surrendered the chief command to Wellesley.

The very existence of the allied forces was now at stake. The Supreme Junta had forbidden Venegas to comply with his superior's orders to advance to Arganda.* King Joseph, therefore, was able to concentrate his whole forces against Wellesley and Cuesta, and need only have waited for Soult to have appeared on their rear to ensure their destruction. He must have been in some degree, at least, aware of the increasing scarcity in the British lines, and that every day's delay impaired the strength of the *Rubios*; † yet he was overruled by the impatience of Marshal Victor, and advanced against the allied position on the 27th July.

Wellesley, having assumed supreme command, placed the Spanish army in two lines, its right resting in front of Battle of Talavera.

* The Duke of Wellington refused to confirm and, apparently, did not believe, the stories current about Cuesta's treachery; nor did he remember the incident related with so much detail by Napier (ii. 395).—*Stanhope*, p. 11.

† The name given by the Spaniards to their allies, because of the red uniform; scarcely complimentary, however, inasmuch as Rubio is also a synonym for Judas Iscariot.

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ÆT. 40. the town of Talavera, which stood along the right bank of the Tagus. The ground in front of the Spanish position was covered with olive trees, and much broken with banks and ditches. All the approaches to the town were defended by batteries, and the Spanish left rested on an eminence, where a redoubt was in process of construction, forming a point of appui for both armies. Beyond that, to the left, where the ground was of an open character, extended the British line, covered by a ravine in front—General Campbell's division first, supported by General Cotton's * cavalry brigade; General Sherbrooke's stood next, including the brigade of Guards; then came the German Legion, and, on the extreme left, General Hill's division, in echelon of brigades, occupying a round height, which formed the key of the whole position. Beyond this hill to the left again, between it and the mountains, was a level plain intersected here and there by ravines, where some cavalry were stationed. General Mackenzie's division, with a brigade of cavalry, occupied an advance post in a wood on the bank of the Alberche. Altogether there were in line of battle 20,641 British (reckoning the German Legion as British),† 34,000 Spanish, and 100 guns, extended on a front of two miles. The French had 80 guns and about 50,000 men.

Narrow escape of the Commander of the Forces.

On the afternoon of the 27th Wellesley rode out to Mackenzie's advanced post, intending to withdraw that division and place it as a second line behind Sherbrooke's. Mackenzie had no patrols out to the front, a neglect which nearly led to the capture of Sir Arthur himself. From the roof of the ruinous Casa de Salinas, where a picket was posted, he was watching the enemy, who was showing in strength on the further side of the Alberche, when the house was suddenly surrounded by a cloud of *tirailleurs*, and Sir Arthur had barely time to mount and make good his escape.‡

* Afterwards Field Marshal Viscount Combermere.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 481.

‡ He told C. Greville that, if he had not been young and active, he must have been taken, for he had to leap from the ruins (*Greville*, part ii. vol. i. 41).

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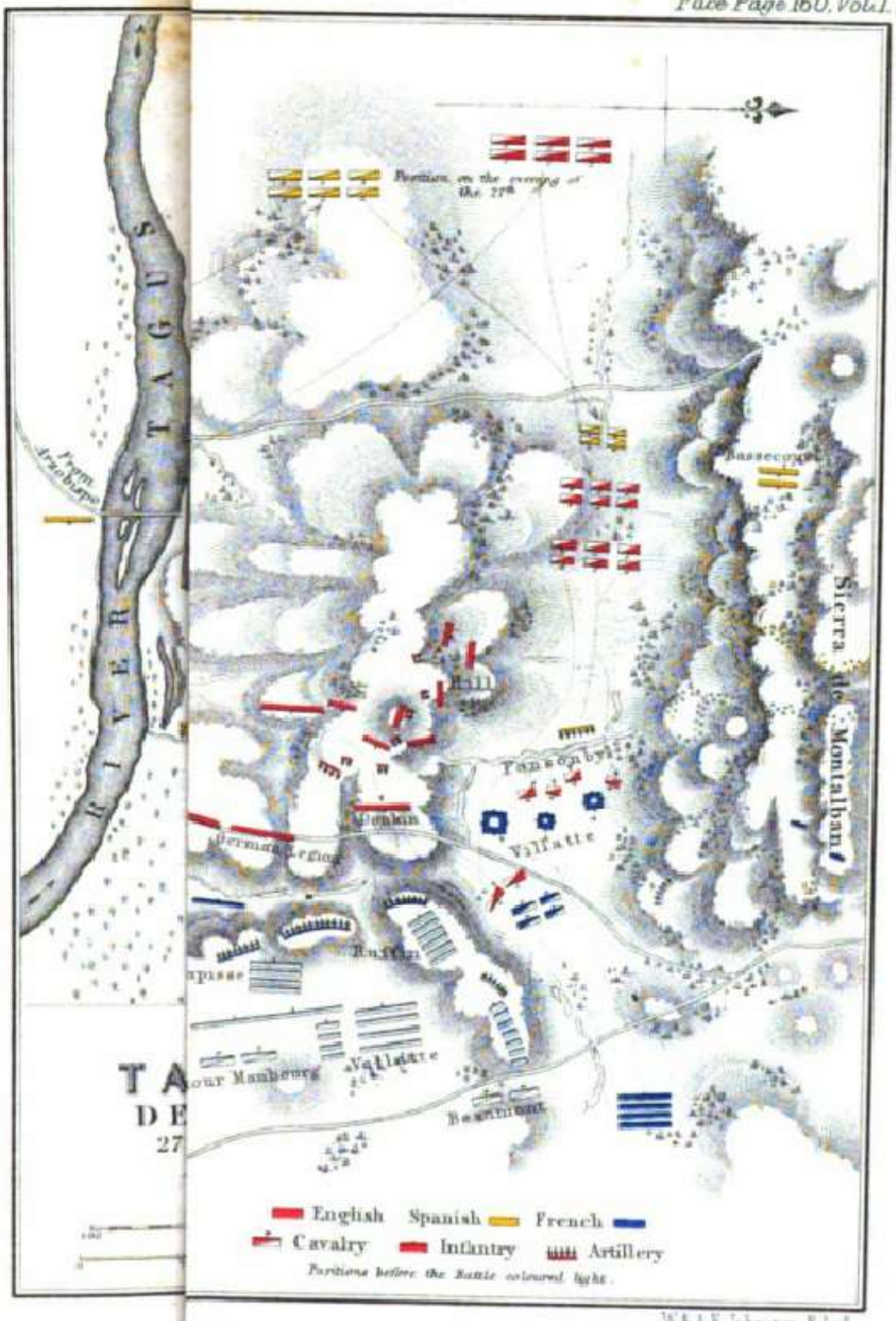
Face Page 160. Vol. I.



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The French columns of Lapisse and Ruffin now crossed the Alberche; the 2nd battalion of H.M. 31st, and the 2nd battalion of H.M. 87th, chiefly young recruits and militiamen, fell into confusion under their attack, and sustained severe loss, partly, it is stated, from each other's fire. But the 45th, that "stubborn old regiment," as Napier calls it, and the 5th battalion 60th Rifles, remained in admirable order, and the division, Wellesley with them, fell back slowly towards the British left, and took their place in the general line, having lost about 400 men. The French continued to advance, sending forward light cavalry under Milhaud to reconnoitre the position of the Spaniards. At their approach Cuesta's men gave way to panic, the artillerymen deserting their guns, and 10,000 infantry, flying along the road to Oropesa, spread the report that the Allies were totally defeated.* Cuesta exerted himself with his cavalry to stop the flight of his infantry, but 6,000 men left the field never to return; and the battery in the central redoubt, instead of playing on the French cavalry, was silent for want of gunners. ANN. 1809.

Wellesley's prudence in placing the Spaniards where their front was protected by olive-yards was now apparent. Victor, choosing the more favourable ground, sent Ruffin's division, supported by Villatte's, to attack that part of the British line where Donkin's brigade, coming in from the front with Mackenzie's divisions, had filled the interval between the German Legion and General Hill. Lapisse at the same time flung himself on the Germans. The shade of a summer night was closing on the scene. Ruffin's attack failed through some of his battalions losing their way in a ravine which ran before the British position, and were repulsed after some sharp bayonet practice, on perceiving which Lapisse also drew off in the dark. Repulse of Ruffin's attack.

After a night broken by many alarums, the battle was renewed at daybreak on the 28th. Covered by a heavy artillery fire from batteries posted on a hill opposite to that Battle renewed on 28th.

* See Appendix B., p. 172.

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Æt. 40. on the British left, Ruffin's battalions advanced in column, supported, as before, by Villatte, and a fierce hand-to-hand encounter took place. Often have Britons and Frenchmen met at the point of the bayonet; never have they separated before bloody work was done. Though Ruffin's grenadiers forced their way to the top of the hill, though General Hill himself fell wounded, yet the attack failed—the blue columns wavered, broke, and fled, leaving 1,500 of their number on the trampled slopes.

The appearance of some light troops on the side of the mountain beyond the plain caused Wellesley to mass his cavalry behind his left, and to send General de Bassecourt with a division of Spaniards up the mountain to keep the French in check.

King Joseph holds a council of war.

Joseph Buonaparte, having carefully scanned the field of battle, called the Marshals Jourdan and Victor into council. His position as King of Spain gave him nominal authority over the Marshals of his dreaded younger brother; nevertheless, these Marshals held office directly from Napoleon, received orders from him as well as from Joseph, and were as independent of each other as they were in some respects of the King. On this occasion the Marshals neutralised each other's influence by holding different opinions. The decision lay with the King. Jourdan declared that the British position was impregnable, and advised taking up a position of observation to await the appearance of Soult on the enemy's rear. Victor was of another mind. He vowed that if a general attack failed, it was time to give up making war altogether.

Seldom, perhaps, have greater issues trembled in the balance of one man's judgment. The British army already was within calculable distance of starvation: the only rations served out that morning had been a few ounces of flour, or even of *wheat in the grain*,* to each man. Had time been allowed for Soult to come up, it is difficult to see how

* *Napier*, ii. 395.

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MARÉCHAL JOURDAN, AUTHOR OF THE CONSCRIPTION.

(After a Drawing by Ambroise Tardieu.)

[*Vol. i. p.* 102.

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Wellesley could have extricated himself; it is *not* difficult to imagine the effect of the loss of his army upon the policy of Great Britain, or to believe that she would have withdrawn from the contest which had already cost her so dear. ANN. 1809.

The combat suspended,

While the French commanders were conferring, the soldiers of both armies broke their ranks and wandered down to drink at the brook which ran between the two positions. Frenchmen and English mingled in frank good fellowship, seeking shelter together under the mulberry trees from the burning heat. Wellesley and Cuesta had arranged to meet at the central redoubt between their armies; Cuesta failing to appear, Wellesley dismounted, lay down in his cloak, and slept calmly till he should appear.*

and resumed.

He slept so till noon—"what time the gray fly winds his sultry horn." At that drowsy hour the French drums began to roll, announcing that the King of Spain and of the Indies had made up his mind; the battalions stood to arms, the cavalry mounted; half an hour later the roar of artillery proclaimed that the enemy had resumed the offensive. General Campbell's division received the onset of Sebastiani's 4th Corps, and, supported by Mackenzie's brigade and two Spanish battalions, repulsed them and captured ten guns. A brilliant and well-timed charge of Spanish cavalry completed their rout.

On the British left, Villatte's division advanced up the plain against General Hill, and Ruffin was seen to be moving against Bassecourt's Spanish division on the mountain. Sir Arthur ordered up General Anson's cavalry brigade, the 23rd Light Dragoons riding on the right, and the 1st German Hussars on the left. They advanced at the gallop as far as the so-called ravine,† which in front of the Germans was impracticable; at least so thought their colonel, Arentschild,

* *Croker*, ii. 312.

† Lord William Russell refers to this as "a very small ditch, which threw most of the rear rank down, the front rank passing it without difficulty" (*Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 718).

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who reined up, exclaiming, "I will not kill my young mans!" But on the left the banks were not so steep; the fox-hunting instinct was strong in Colonel Ponsonby* and his light dragoons; they negociated the obstacle with a scramble that broke all their order. Quickly reforming, they charged the French columns, which received them in square. Staggering under a terrible fire, they sustained the charge of two regiments of light cavalry which Villatte sent up at the right moment, and, leaving half their number on the ground, the remainder sought shelter with Bassecourt's Spaniards beyond the valley. Their charge, however, had been effective in stopping the execution of the enemy's turning movement on the British left.†

Fine charge of the 23rd Light Dragoons.

Lapisse's columns recoiled under a well-directed fire from Sherbrooke's division; their defeat was completed by a magnificent bayonet charge; but the impetuosity of the brigade of Guards went near to losing the day for the Allies. They followed so far as to come in contact with the enemy's supports, and, falling into disorder under a charge of dragoons, left a dangerous gap in the British line. At the same critical moment the Germans on the left of the Guards gave way; but Wellesley had his eye on the weak spot: no sooner did he see the Guards pressing on too far, than he sent for the 48th Regiment from the hill on the left, and ordered up Cotton's light cavalry brigade. Then was seen a beautiful display of discipline. Deploying in rear of the broken line, this fine corps advanced, halted, broke into column to allow the beaten Guardsmen and Germans to pass through, wheeled up into line again, and poured a destructive fire upon the pursuing columns. Brave General Lapisse fell mortally wounded; Cotton's dragoons came up at the trot and

Impetuosity of the Guards.

Steadiness of the 48th Regiment.

* Afterwards Major-General Sir Frederick C. Ponsonby, Governor of Malta. He received seven wounds at Waterloo.

† *Despatches*, iv. 507, where Wellesley lays more stress on the effect of this picturesque charge than Napier does, who was not present at Talavera. Brialmont does not mention it.

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charged; the Guards and Germans rallied and reformed steadily on the 48th; the French halted, wavered, and retired, suffering heavily from artillery as they crossed the plateau. ANN. 1809.

The 48th had won the day.

"The advance of the Guards to the extent to which it was carried was nearly fatal to us, and the battle was certainly saved by the advance, position, and steady conduct of the 48th Regiment." *

Retreat of the French.

The whole of Victor's line was in retreat by six o'clock. Three hours of daylight remained, yet, although Joseph's reserves had not been engaged, the combat was not renewed.† Wellesley's half-starved army was not in a condition to undertake pursuit. They had been fighting more or less continuously for thirty hours, and their losses had been very severe—5,422 killed, wounded, and missing on the 28th added to 846 on the previous day, made the total casualties 6,268. Two Generals (Mackenzie and Langworth) and 31 other officers, with 767 non-commissioned and privates, perished on the field. The French, therefore, were allowed to retreat in good order, and reoccupied the ground they had held in the morning, leaving behind them, however, twenty guns with ammunition and tumbrils. At daybreak on the 29th they retired across the Alberche.‡ Of course this

* *Despatches*, iv. 510.

† "Every officer I have seen and spoken to about the matter has told me the same story, viz. that the battle of Talavera was lost if the French had made one more attack; and that the whole army expected to be beaten next day" (*Life and Opinions*, vol. i. p. 126). Writing to Major Barclay, one of his old officers in India, Wellesley said, "The battle of Talavera was the hardest fought of modern times. The fire at Assaye was heavier while it lasted; but the battle of Talavera lasted for two days and a night. Each party engaged lost a fourth of their numbers!!!" (*Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 431).

‡ "Give Monsieur de Metternich the news that, in Spain, General Wellesley, with 30,000 English, has been thoroughly beaten, about three days' journey from Madrid, and that, as a consequence, the English will be driven into the sea" (*Emperor Napoleon to the Comte de Champagny, Minister for Foreign Affairs: Lettres inédites*, p. 152).

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Æt. 40. defeat might have been rendered much more fruitful had the British General been able to send forward the Spanish army which had not been engaged on the 28th. But to do so would have been to court inevitable disaster. Cuesta was busy all day inflicting punishment on the battalions which had misbehaved on the 27th, of which he caused to be shot some fifty officers and men. His army might, as Wellesley observed, have done good service by acting on the enemy's flank during the attack on the British position; but, he added, "they were not in a state of discipline to manœuvre in olive grounds, etc., and if they had got into a state of confusion all would have been lost." *

Forced march of the Light Brigade.

On the 29th General Robert Craufurd marched into camp with his Light Brigade (afterwards to become so famous as the Light Division),† consisting of the 43rd, 52nd, a battalion of the 95th Regiment, and the "chestnut troop" of Horse Artillery. They had encountered in their march from Lisbon, some of the runaways from Talavera — "not all Spaniards," as Napier observes with sinister significance — who told them that Wellesley was killed, the army destroyed, and that the French were only a few miles off in pursuit. Craufurd, an officer of stern nature and unflinching resolution, at once drafted fifty weak men from his brigade, and started to reach the field of battle. In twenty-six hours he reported himself to his chief, having brought his brigade, it is said, sixty-two English miles in that time, losing only seventeen stragglers on the way. "This march," says Alison, "deserves to be noted as the most rapid made by any foot-soldiers during the whole war."‡

* *Despatches*, iv. 510.

† The infantry of the Light Division was formed in 1810 of two brigades consisting of: (1) the 43rd Regiment, 3rd Caçadores, and four companies of the 95th Rifles; (2) the 52nd Regiment, 1st Caçadores, and four companies of the 95th.

‡ He might have added "or any other war," if it is accurately reported. Military men of experience are divided in opinion about it; many deny that it was possible. Admiral Sir John Dalrymple Hay informs me that, when a boy,

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Up to this point Sir Arthur Wellesley had made too light of the danger to the Allies from Soult's approach. He had relied too much on Beresford, and on four battalions which Cuesta had sent to guard the pass of Baños. These last abandoned their post without firing a shot on the appearance of the French advanced guard, and on 1st August Wellesley received advices that Marshal Soult had occupied Plasencia. Still he could not believe that Soult had more than 15,000 men, and, after consultation with Cuesta, he decided to give battle at Oropesa, while the Spanish army remained in Talavera guarding the hospitals in which were 1,500 sick and wounded British. Cuesta undertook, on Wellesley's advice, to strengthen his position with redoubts and abattis,* which would have rendered it almost impregnable; but the Spanish General's performance bore unvarying relation to his promises —not a spade was put in the ground nor an axe to a tree.

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Dangerous situation of the Allies.

The British force marched at daylight on 3rd August, overtaking Bassecourt's Spanish division at Centinello and reaching Oropesa that night. What was Sir Arthur's concern when, the following morning, General Cuesta arrived with his whole army behind him, having abandoned Talavera and the British wounded upon a rumour that Victor was returning to attack him! In truth Victor, overrating the strength of Sir Robert Wilson at Escalona, and believing Wellesley to have 25,000 British troops, was still retiring on Madrid, just as Wellesley, underrating the numbers with Soult, was pressing on to attack 53,000 of the enemy at Plasencia. In warfare the science and skill of the players are affected by infinite chances; but Cuesta, with neither science nor

Wellesley leaves Cuesta at Talavera.

he was drilled by one Serjeant-Major Lawson, who marched in the Light Brigade to Talavera. Lawson taught his pupil the quick step invented by Sir John Moore—three paces walking, alternating with three paces running—and told him that the Light Brigade used it on this march whenever the track was suitable, and that by this means they covered six miles an hour. I have tried the step, and certainly it enables one to travel very quickly without getting blown. Troops constantly practised in it might be regarded as accelerated infantry.

* Trees felled and laid with the branches outwards, strongly interlaced.

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skill, invariably, in gambler's phrase, "disappointed his luck."

Soult had advanced as far as Naval Moral, about fifteen miles from Oropesa, before Wellesley realised the formidable strength of the enemy and the serious character of his own position. He had lost his base at Talavera; Soult lay between him and the bridge of boats at Almaraz; there remained but one means of escape, and he seized it. Cuesta, who invariably disagreed with any proposal by his ally, was for waiting to give battle at Oropesa; Wellesley, telling him to do as he pleased, marched at daybreak on the 4th, crossed the Tagus by the bridge at Arzobispo, and on 7th August established his headquarters at Deleytosa. Craufurd, with his Light Brigade, pushed on to guard the bridge at Almaraz from the left bank. On the 7th Victor re-occupied Talavera, all the British wounded, except those able to accompany the army in its retreat, falling into his hands, but receiving most humane treatment, in accord with the chivalrous relations which always prevailed beeween the soldiers of King George and the Emperor.

Wellesley crosses the Tagus.

Cuesta followed Wellesley's army over the bridge of Arzobispo, General Bassecourt's division being left to defend it. Soult, still advancing, was in communication with Victor before he realised that his enemy had given him the slip. At noon on the 8th the French surprised Bassecourt, whose division was only saved from complete destruction by the Duke of Albuquerque's cavalry, which were well handled. The main body of the Spanish army, which lay not far off, immediately began to retire pell-mell upon the strong ground of the Meza d'Ibor, leaving thirty guns to be picked up by the French. This was Cuesta's last exploit. He was superseded by the Junta on 12th August, and General Eguia was given command of the army of Estremadura.

Removal of Cuesta from his command.

On 11th August Sir Robert Wilson, having withdrawn from Escalona, was attacked by the French in the Puerto de Baños, and completely defeated. On the same day, General

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Venegas, whose corps, for equipment and discipline, was the best in Spain, was engaged by Sebastiani, and, after a conflict of nine hours, was driven back on the Sierra Morena. Wellesley retired to Jaraceijo. Victor had thrown some troops across the Tagus by the bridge of Talavera; Soult, having ascertained the existence of a ford below Almaraz, directed Ney to cross the Tagus at that point and intercept the British retreat from Deleytosa. Nothing interfered to prevent the concentration of 85,000 French in pursuit of the Allies—nothing, at least, except the difficulty of feeding such a host, disagreement between Jourdan, Soult, and Ney about a plan of operations, and, finally, instructions received from Napoleon that no operations of magnitude should be undertaken until the arrival of reinforcements, which the defeat of Austria at Wagram (5th July), and the armistice following, enabled him to detach from Germany. ANN. 1809.

Sir Arthur, thoroughly convinced that all his future operations against the French must be independent of co-operation with Spain, announced to Lord Wellesley, the British Minister at Seville, his intention of returning to Portugal. The very existence of his army was endangered by the indolence of the local authorities in furnishing supplies, or their malevolence in withholding them. While the Spanish soldiers lived in abundance, the British, between 20th July and 20th August, had received whole rations on ten days only. Privation of the very necessaries of life, long continued, demoralises the steadiest troops. Sir Arthur's general orders at this time contain painful evidence of disorder and pillage which no amount of punishment availed to prevent. Let any "gentleman of England who lives at home at ease" declare, if he can, that he is able to encounter the difficulties of life with the same equanimity before breakfast as he can command after it!

"A starving army," wrote Sir Arthur on 8th August, "is actually worse than none. The soldiers lose their discipline and their spirit. They plunder even in the presence of their officers.

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ÆT. 40. **The officers are discontented and are almost as bad as the men; and with an army which a fortnight ago beat double their number, I should now hesitate to meet a French corps half their strength." ***

Sir Arthur's intention of withdrawing into Portugal threw the Junta of Seville into such a violent consternation that, on the representation of Lord Wellesley, he modified his dispositions, and went into cantonments at Badajos. Writing thence on 13th September to the Secretary of State, Sir Arthur wrote: "I am more convinced than ever that if I had not taken the steps I did . . . I should have lost the army; whereas it is now acquiring strength daily."

The British go into cantonments at Badajos.

The campaign of Talavera was at an end. Wellesley has been severely blamed by military critics for his rash advance in presence of superior numbers; but, given that degree of efficiency which he was justified in expecting in his Spanish allies, and the charge of rashness would fall to the ground. Beresford protected his left flank; Wilson threatened the rear of any force advancing to meet the allied army from Madrid; while the advance of Venegas from the south was a masterly design, only marred by the interference of the Junta of Seville. Soult's delay of three days in leaving Salamanca, and Joseph's refusal to wait for his arrival, saved the British army when the worthlessness of its allies had become apparent and the want of supplies had arrested its advance.

Napoleon severely criticised the action of his Marshals in permitting the British army to escape. He blamed Jourdan for directing Soult's march on Plasencia instead of on Madrid, and so allowing Wellesley to beat the King's forces before Soult could arrive. Ignoring, as usual, the difficulty of sustaining a large force in one district, he told Jourdan that it was a culpable blunder to divide the army into two parts, and thus afford the enemy a chance of encountering them in detail. He pointed out the folly of attacking a position

* *Despatches*, v. 15.

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without first reconnoitring it. "So surely," said he, "as one attacks such good troops as the English in a good position, without reconnoitring and being assured that it is possible to carry it, one leads men to death in pure wastefulness." Above all, and here he hit the crowning blot in the conduct of the action, he held it disgraceful to be beaten with 12,000 men in reserve who had not fired a shot.* Had Joseph brought up this reserve, it is scarcely possible that Wellesley could have saved his army. ANN. 1809.

Due recognition was made by the British and Spanish Governments of the talents of the General who had defeated four of Napoleon's redoubtable Marshals in the space of as many months. The Central Junta conferred on him the rank of Captain-General, sent him a present of horses, which he accepted, declining, however, as he had done when receiving similar honours in Portugal, to accept the pay attached to the rank; King George made him a peer—Baron Douro of Wellesley, and Viscount Wellington of Talavera; and Parliament voted him a pension of £2,000 a year for three lives, though this was vehemently resisted by the Opposition in both Houses. The Common Council of London petitioned against it, and prayed the King not to award any distinction to the General who had exhibited, "with equal rashness and ostentation, nothing but a useless valour." The whole policy of the war and the conduct of the General were made the subject of debate; Wellesley's project of holding Portugal against the armies of France was denounced as "impertinent" and "ridiculous;" nevertheless, the Government carried their bill by a majority of fifty in the Lords, and of ninety-six in the Commons. Sir Arthur Wellesley receives a peerage.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, xiii. 358.

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Appendix B.

The Conduct of the Spanish Armies.

It is not agreeable to cast reflections on the allies of Britain in the great struggle with Napoleon, but no just idea can be formed of the difficulties Wellington had to overcome unless it is understood how completely he was deceived in the expectation formed of the Spanish troops. At first sight, his despatches after Talavera seem to show that the statements of Napier and other writers were grossly exaggerated. "I have reason to be satisfied," he wrote to the Secretary of State, "with the conduct of all the officers and troops." This might be interpreted to apply only to the troops under his immediate command; but, in writing to the British ministers at Lisbon and Seville, Lord Wellington, with more regard to diplomatic discretion than implicit accuracy, paid his allies some high compliments. Thus, to Mr. Villiers—

"The Spanish troops that were engaged behaved well; but there were very few of them engaged, as the attack was made upon us." *

And, again, to Mr. Frere—

"I am well satisfied with the conduct of the Spanish officers and troops who had an opportunity of assisting us. Bassecourt's division was of great use to us, in covering our left flank upon a mountain. The regiment of cavalry, I think called the King's, made an excellent and well-timed charge upon our right." †

But, writing a month later to his brother, Lord Wellesley, who in the interval had been appointed Minister at Seville, in succession to Mr. Frere, further experience of his allies had convinced Wellington that the behaviour of Cuesta's Spaniards at Talavera was no accidental or exceptional manifestation, but the natural result of placing untrained masses

* *Despatches*, iv. 510. † *Ibid.*, 512.

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of men, however brave and active individually, under the command of vain, ignorant, and undisciplined officers.

"I now come to another topic, which is one of serious consideration . . . and that is the frequent, I ought to say constant, and shameful misbehaviour of the Spanish troops before the enemy. We in England never hear of their defeats and flights; but I have heard of Spanish officers telling of nineteen and twenty actions of the description of that at the bridge of Arzobispo.* . . . In the battle of Talavera, in which the Spanish army, with very trifling exceptions, was not engaged, whole corps threw away their arms, and ran off *in my presence*, when they were neither attacked nor threatened with an attack, but frightened, I believe, by their own fire. I refer your Excellency for evidence upon this subject to General Cuesta's orders, in which, after extolling the gallantry of his army in general, he declares his intention to decimate the runaways, an intention which he afterwards carried into execution.† When these dastardly soldiers run away, they plunder everything they meet; and in their flight from Talavera, they plundered the baggage of the British army, which was at the moment bravely engaged in their cause." ‡

In a subsequent despatch to Lord Castlereagh (25th August, 1809), he entered into greater detail.

"The Spanish cavalry are, I believe, nearly without discipline. They are in general well clothed, armed, and accoutred, and remarkably well mounted . . . but I have never heard anybody pretend that in any one instance they had behaved as soldiers should in the presence of an enemy. They make no scruple of running off, and after an action are to be found in every shady bottom within fifty miles of the field of battle. The Spanish artillery are, as far as I have seen them, unexceptionable, and the Portuguese artillery excellent. In respect to the great body

* On 8th August, 1809.

† That is, to shoot every tenth man by lot. The intention was actually carried out to the extent of about 50 or 60 men, when Wellesley succeeded in stopping the butchery.

‡ *Despatches*, v. 80.

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of all armies, I mean the infantry, it is lamentable to see how bad that of the Spaniards is, and how unequal to a contest with the French. They are armed, I believe, well; they are badly accoutred, not having the means of saving their ammunition from the rain; not clothed in some instances at all, in others clothed in such a manner as to make them look like peasants, which ought, of all things, to be avoided, and their discipline appears to me to be confined to placing them in the ranks, three deep at very close order, and to the manual exercise. . . . This practice of running away, and throwing off arms, accoutrements, and clothing, is fatal to everything, excepting a re-assembly of the men in a state of nature, who as regularly perform the same manœuvre the next time an occasion offers. . . . Nothing can be worse than the officers of the Spanish army; and it is extraordinary that when a nation has devoted itself to war . . . so little progress has been made in any one branch of the military profession by any individual. . . . After this statement you (the Cabinet) will judge for yourselves whether you will employ any, and what strength of army in support of the cause in Spain. . . . I can only tell you that I feel no inclination to join in co-operation with them again."

So deeply was Lord Wellington impressed with the danger of attempting to co-operate with troops so badly commanded, that he absolutely refused to take any part in the campaign which ended with the defeat of the Duque del Parque at Alba de Tormes and that of Areyzaga at Ocaña.

Lieut.-Gen. Viscount Wellington to Marquis Wellesley.

"Badajos, 16th September, 1809.

"As long as Spanish armies are suffered to continue in the state of indiscipline and disorder in which they are at present, it will be impossible to continue in their neighbourhood; as they not only consume the provisions of the country, but will not allow the villagers to supply to the British troops those provisions which they require, and which the Spanish troops do not want."*

* *Despatches*, v. 156.

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As a rule the Spanish infantry wore no uniform, but were clothed as peasants, picturesquely enough, no doubt, but, as Wellington perceived and reported, greatly to the detriment of their steadiness and the encouragement of desertion. It is no reproach to a peaceful peasant that he flees from the neighbourhood of a battle: Spanish soldiers had only to fling away their arms and accoutrements to be indistinguishable from ordinary country farmers and labourers.

Wellington used freely to admit that the Spanish rank and file were of fine quality; nevertheless, all that he could say of them, until a late period of the war, was that, "by putting them in third and fourth lines we made them something, or at least made the French think them something." * "The men," wrote an officer of H.M. 9th Regiment, "are uncommonly fine; the officers like dried grasses, about the height of three penn'orth of halfpence." †

Brave to a fault, patient, wonderfully enduring, active, and temperate, how was it that this fine race, once the hardest fighters in the world, had fallen to such a state of worthlessness? The secret lay in the worthlessness of their officers. They, too, were individually brave, but they lacked the power over their men which comes of professional knowledge alone. Early in the war the Portuguese army was placed under Wellington's command: British officers, trained according to his notions of what officers should be, soon turned that army into a splendid fighting force—"the fighting-cocks of the army," as Wellington called them after the battle of Sorauren. It was not till 1812 that the armies of Spain were placed under Wellington's command: a few months' rigorous application of principles—a steady and sometimes apparently harsh insistence on officers qualifying for their commands ‡—

* *Stanhope*, 107.

† *Dumaresq MSS.*

‡ Speaking on the subject of Spanish officers to Lord de Ros, Wellington observed: "I considered General Wimpfen one of the cleverest. In general, what prevents their becoming good is their conceit and want of application.

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and the result was seen in the splendid behaviour of some Spanish divisions in the Pyrenees.

The lesson can never be too diligently studied. No superior physical qualities—no innate military predisposition of race—will produce a good army; well-instructed officers will turn almost any people into good soldiers. "Nothing is so true," observed Wellington to Lady Salisbury, "than the proverb—'Better an army of stags commanded by a lion than an army of lions commanded by a stag.' Look at the troops I commanded at Vimeiro. They were the same as, but a few months before, had been surrounded under Whitelock at Buenos Ayres, and were forced by the Spanish *bourgeoisie* to lay down their arms." * Superior social rank and wealth will add immensely to the influence of officers over their men; but if these men are to rely on and obey them in action, the officers must have gained their confidence by attention to them in quarters and camp, and by making professional efficiency a point of honour. In nothing is knowledge more truly power than in the command of men. In our own service, if the system were ever reverted to which permitted young officers the option of neglecting the study of the art of war, *nine out of ten would avail themselves of it*, and use their social and military rank as means of self-gratification. That is human nature; and the result would be that the British army might make a pretty show on a birthday parade, but would infallibly go to pieces when there was real work to be done.

Among those who were with the Generals acting in concert with me, it was curious to see how little it occurred to them to improve their judgment by observing and studying the events passing under their noses; experience therefore was scarcely of any service to them. A Spaniard thinks only of gaining a victory; but as to considering any result or for what object the effort is to be made he will not trouble himself. Thus his success loses half its value, and if he fails his defeat is a desperate one" (*de Rios MS.*).

* *Salisbury MSS.*, 1837.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS.

1809–1810.

1809. The Marquess Wellesley is appointed British Minister to Spain.
Lord Wellington acts on the defensive.
Napoleon appoints Masséna to command the army of Portugal.
January 15, 1810. The British army recrosses the Tagus.
March . . . . . The Hon. H. Wellesley succeeds the Marquis Wellesley as Ambassador to Spain.
Wellington calls the whole Portuguese population to arms.
Ferocious character of the war.
June . . . . . Masséna invests Ciudad Rodrigo.
July 11 . . . . . Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo.
July 24 . . . . . General Craufurd disregards his orders, and jeopardises his division.
August 27 . . . . Capitulation of Almeida to the French.
Proclamations by Wellington and Masséna.
Impatience of the Portuguese Government.
September 16 . . Masséna invades Portugal.
„ 27 . . Battle of Busaco.
Moral effect of victory on the Allies.
The Allies resume their retreat.
Improved discipline of the British soldiers.
October . . . . . The Allies enter the lines of Torres Vedras.
November 14 . . . The French retire upon Santarem.

THE appointment of the Marquis Wellesley to succeed Mr. Frere as Minister to the Junta of Seville, immediately after the battle of Talavera, once more brought the brothers into relations almost parallel to those which had

The Marquis of Wellesley appointed Ambassador to Spain.

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formerly connected them with such admirable results to the British empire in India.* What effect might have been wrought on affairs in the Peninsula under the renewal of this dual control must remain matter for speculation; for the outbreak of a violent quarrel between Canning and Castlereagh, the resignation of these important ministers, and the duel between them on 21st September, 1809, brought about the recall of Lord Wellesley to take up the seals of the Foreign Office, while Lord Liverpool took Castlereagh's place at the War Office, and Mr. Perceval succeeded the Duke of Portland as Prime Minister.

Duel between Canning and Castlereagh.

Wellington was deeply concerned about the rupture between Castlereagh and Canning, both because of his friendship for Castlereagh, and because that rupture removed him from the War Office.

Viscount Wellington to Viscount Castlereagh.

"Lisbon, 14th October, 1809.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I have come down here to arrange finally for the defence of Portugal. I have received your private letter of the 23rd. . . . Your brother Charles † has likewise communicated to me Cooke's letter and other papers relating to the late unfortunate transactions in England, and I cannot express to you what I feel upon them. It would appear that your friendship to me, or what I believe in the instance referred to I ought properly to call your sense of what is just to me and others, was the original cause of the dissatisfaction of your colleague; and yet I must say that in the unfortunate circumstances in which I was

* *The Earl of Liverpool to Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. Wellesley.*

20th August, 1809.—"I trust you will be satisfied with the large discretionary powers which have been recently sent to Lord Wellesley and yourself. *You* on the spot can alone duly estimate the ultimate chances of success in Spain; we know you will exercise them dispassionately; and it is therefore properly left to your discretion to follow up your advantages or to extricate yourselves from your difficulties, as the aspect of affairs in the Peninsula may appear to render most prudent and advisable" (*Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 332).

† Adjutant-General to the army in the Peninsula, and afterwards third Marquess of Londonderry.

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placed last year, the conduct and expressions of Mr. Canning were as kind as those of any other ministers. I recollect perfectly to have gone with him to Blackheath, immediately after my return from Portugal, purposely that he might hear the circumstances under which my name appeared in the armistice; and I do not recollect that he expressed any disapprobation of the motives which had induced me to sign that instrument. . . . I have experienced many acts of kindness and friendship from you. If I had been your brother you could not have been more careful of my interests than you have been in late instances, and on every occasion it has always appeared to me that you sought for opportunities to oblige me and to mark your friendship for me. . . . I never imagined that the line taken by the Government upon that occasion (the Court of Inquiry) could be imputed as a crime to you as calculated to screen me. It is impossible to read the accounts of what has passed without indignation at the manner in which you have been treated; and though I regret the duel, and consider it as a fatal event, I must admit that your feelings could not have been otherwise satisfied." * ANN. 1809.

The Right Hon. H. Wellesley succeeds his brother as Ambassador.

In the following spring Lord Wellesley sent his brother Henry to succeed him as Minister Plenipotentiary to the Government of Spain.

The experienced author of the *Operations of War* † has suggested that Lord Wellington drew from the sufferings of his own forces on the Tagus the idea of overcoming the mighty masses of the enemy by exposing them to similar privations. It may well be so, but there were other causes which influenced Wellington in abandoning an offensive strategy and adopting, as he now did, the Fabian policy which some of his critics have pronounced to be his chief characteristic as a commander. In the first place, by the end of 1809 the Spanish armies had almost ceased to exist. One after another they had been exposed, by the inordinate rashness of the

Wellington adopts defensive action.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 401.

† The late General Sir Edward Hamley, G.C.B., M.P. (see *Wellington's Career*, p. 30).

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Æt. 40. Junta, in conflicts of which they invariably got the worst.* The crowning disaster occurred at Ocaña on 19th November, when General Areyzaga, who had been directed by the Junta to advance on Madrid with 50,000 men, was completely defeated by 25,000 French, losing 55 cannon.†

In the second place, the "large discretionary powers" referred to in Lord Liverpool's despatch of 20th August had undergone some contraction. The shocking condition of the troops on their return from Walcheren had struck a chill into the public spirit; misgiving and boding of further disaster was rife. Lord Liverpool's tone altered; above all things, Wellington was warned against risking anything, and anxious inquiries were constantly addressed to him as to his position in the event of evacuation being decided on. On 20th October, 1809, Liverpool wrote—

"As there is every reason to believe that peace has been concluded between Austria and France, and that the whole military efforts of France will probably in a short time be directed in consequence of this event against Spain . . . if a serious attack is made by the French upon Portugal, what is the prospect of successful resistance? If resistance is not likely to prove ultimately successful, how far would the British army be endangered, and its embarkation be likely to be prevented, by delaying

* "The Spaniards have now (19th December, 1809) no army that is complete, excepting 13,000 men under the Duque de Albuquerque in Estramadura; and yet nothing can be done by the French after all their victories. What would have been the relative state of the two contending parties, if the Spaniards had been tolerably prudent, and had acted as they were advised to act?" (*Despatches*, v. 349, note).

† When Napoleon III. was editing the letters of the great Emperor he laid aside several which he did not deem it expedient to lay before the world. These have since been collected and published (*Lettres inédites de Napoléon 1er*, publiées par Léon Lecestre, Paris, 1897), and will be found instructive. There is a lurid suggestion in one written to Berthier after the battle of Ocaña. "Let the Duke of Dalmatia (Soult) know that I learn with indignation that some of the prisoners taken at Ocaña have been released, and their arms restored to several. When I witness such behaviour I ask—is this treason or imbecility? Is it then only French blood that is to flow in Spain without regret and without vengeance?" (vol. i. p. 381).

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to withdraw it till the French had penetrated in force into Portugal?" * ANN. 1809.

To these inquiries and many like them Wellington replied with unvarying calmness.

"My opinion is that the enemy ought to make the possession of Portugal their first object . . . that they would be successfully resisted . . . that when they shall receive their reinforcements, they can be successfully resisted. † . . . In respect to the embarkation of the British army in the event of failure . . . I have no doubt that we should be able in that case to embark, and bring away the British army, not including the horses of the cavalry and of the artillery. ‡ . . . I am convinced we could embark after defeat." §

Throughout this winter of 1809–10 Wellington had to find confidence for the Cabinet in London, as well as to inspire his own officers with endurance in the field. It must not, however, be understood that the Cabinet were disposed to throw up the cards, even if Portugal should have to be evacuated. Lord Liverpool constantly refers to evacuation as a contingency not improbable, even imminent, but he couples it with the idea of transferring the army under Wellington to the neighbourhood of Cadiz. ‖ English writers are ever too prone to complaints about their own statesmen, but, in truth, there are few passages in history which reflect a more brilliant light on our rulers than the chronicle of these years of storm and stress. There were times, however, of indecision, when the Cabinet sent contradictory instructions to Wellington, and threw upon him more responsibility than even he was willing to undertake. ¶

* *Despatches*, v. 274, note. † *Ibid.*, 275. ‡ *Ibid.*, 273.
§ *Ibid.*, 275. ‖ *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 547.

¶ *Viscount Wellington to Mr. Stuart, Minister at Lisbon.*

21st April, 1810.—"The state of public opinion in England is very unfavourable to the Peninsula. The ministers are as much alarmed as the public, or as the Opposition pretend to be. . . . Their private letters are in some

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For a time, then, Wellington was compelled to lay aside that intrepid strategy which, within little more than a year, had overthrown Junot at Vimiero, Soult at Oporto, Joseph, Victor, and Jourdan at Talavera, in order to try a fall with a fifth and the mightiest of Napoleon's Marshals—*l'enfant chéri de la victoire*—the indomitable André Masséna, Prince of Essling.* Freed from his contest with Austria, but prevented by his unlovely domestic arrangements—the divorce of Josephine and his betrothal to the Austrian Archduchess—from taking the field himself, the Emperor committed to Masséna the task which really did seem easy this time—of driving the English into the sea. Evacuation was the word on everybody's lips—the British press teemed with it—the British Opposition insisted on it; the only doubt was lest Masséna, with 100,000 fresh troops released from Germany, should not arrive in time to inflict a defeat on Wellington before he took to his ships.

Masséna takes command of the army of Portugal.

Meanwhile, at Badajos the British occupied the best position for the defence of Portugal, as long as the Duque de

degree at variance with their public instructions, and I have called for an explanation of the former. . . . Their instructions are clear enough, and I am willing to act under them; though they throw upon me the whole responsibility of bringing away the army in safety, after staying in the Peninsula till it shall be necessary to evacuate it. But it will not answer in these times to receive private hints and opinions from ministers, which, if attended to, would lead to an act directly contrary to the spirit, and even to the letter, of the public instructions; at the same time that, if not attended to, the danger of the responsibility imposed by the public instructions is increased tenfold" (*Despatches*, vi. 48).

* The Duke always said that, after Napoleon, Masséna was the ablest of the French generals—their *meilleure tête militaire* (*Croker*, i. 339, ii. 310). "Soult," he said, "did not quite understand a field of battle: he was an excellent tactician—knew how to bring his troops to the field, but not so well how to use them when he had brought them up" (*Stanhope*, p. 20; see also *Croker*, iii. 275). Speaking of Masséna to Lord de Ros, Wellington said, "He gave me more trouble than any of them, because where I expected to find him weak, he generally contrived somehow that I should find him strong" (*de Ros MS.*). Masséna was of humble birth, his father having kept a tavern at Turbia, near Monte Carlo.

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MARÉCHAL ANDRÉ MASSÉNA, PRINCE D'ESSLING.
[*Vol. i. p.* 182.

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Albuquerque remained in the Meza d'Ibor; but as soon as that General, by command of the restless Junta, also fell back on the Guadiana, Wellington was compelled to cross the Tagus, as much in order to maintain his communications as for the defence of northern Portugal against Masséna.* Portugal and its defence were the first objects in Wellington's view, yet he did not neglect the defences of southern Spain. General Vanegas commanded in Cadiz at the end of the year, and "although," wrote Wellington, "I am one of those who are of opinion that the English ought to have nothing to say to Cadiz;" † yet he wrote also long and minute instructions for the defence of that city, to which he had paid a flying visit in September. ANN. 1810.

The presence of the British force on the Tagus, though it was a mere handful compared to the French armies in Spain, had an important influence on the movements of the enemy. After the battle of Ocaña in November, nothing prevented an unopposed invasion of Andalusia and, probably, the capture of Cadiz itself; instead of which, Soult withdrew into Old Castille, and postponed his movement southward for two months, until the approach of Masséna with fresh troops made his rear safe.

The British army re-crosses the Tagus.

On 15th January Wellington moved his army across the Tagus into cantonments extending from Guarda on the right towards the Douro, with headquarters at Viseu, Craufurd's Light Division holding an advanced post on the Coa. The British strength was 2,800 cavalry and 16,700 infantry, of which 800 were in Lisbon; General Hill, with 4,400 men, being left at Abrantes to watch the line of the Tagus. The health of the troops, which had suffered severely at Badajos, improved steadily in their new cantonments.‡

Construction of the lines of Torres Vedras.

Quietly, stealthily—lest an inquisitive press in England should reveal the design to the enemy §—a project was being

* *Despatches*, v. 353, note. † *Ibid.*, v. 375. ‡ *Ibid.*

§ Very frequent were Wellington's complaints about the advantage derived by the French from a perusal of English journals. The condition of the

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Æt 40. carried into effect in those winter months, conceived by Wellington for the defence of Portugal. The tenacity with which he adhered to this design, the quiet confidence with which it enabled him to allay the apprehensions of ministers, to disregard the outcry of the Opposition, and to resist the pressure of the Spanish Juntas and the Portuguese Regency, reveal the quality of his genius more distinctly, perhaps, than any other passage in his whole career. During a visit which he paid to Lisbon in October, 1809, Lord Wellington had selected positions for a series of defensive works whereby the tongue of land on which Lisbon stands should be converted into a vast fortress covering about five hundred square miles of ground. The tongue of land referred to is crossed by two lines of mountains running from the Atlantic to the Tagus. The most northerly of these Wellington directed should be fortified throughout its whole length of twenty-seven miles with a line of redoubts connected by scarps executed on the natural hill brows, and by entrenchments in the valleys. This constituted the first line of defence. The second line was drawn from six to ten miles in rear of the first, taking the range of hills between the mouth of the river San Lorenza and the Tagus—about twenty-four miles in all. Wellington directed that this should be made stronger than the first line by scarpings, retrenchments, redoubts, and works for artificial inundation. Twenty-four miles in rear of the second, the interval being plain ground, a third line of defence was planned, intended to cover a forced embarkation in the

British army, its movements and dispositions, the strength of reinforcements, the intentions of the Commander-in-chief—all these were laid bare to the extent which must have delighted the French authorities as much as it embarrassed their enemies in the field. In 1811 Berthier wrote to Masséna: "... We are perfectly informed by the English, much better than you are. The Emperor reads the London journals, and every day a number of letters by (members of) the Opposition, of which some accuse Lord Wellington and discuss your operations in detail." Lord Liverpool agreed with Lord Wellington about the disadvantage of publishing *everything*, and requested him to prepare duplicate despatches—one for the perusal of the Cabinet only, the other for the public press.

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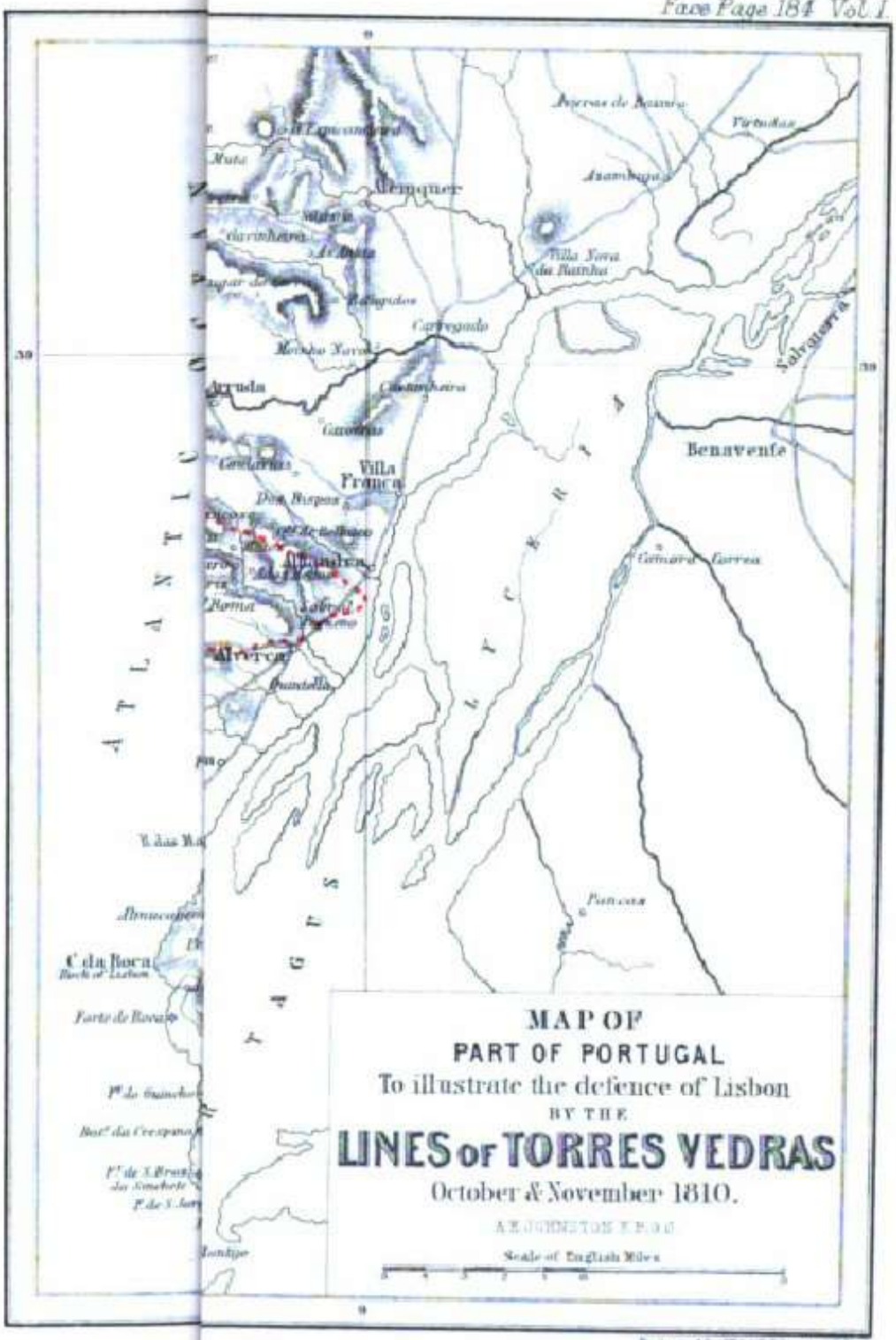

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unlikely event of the first two lines being carried; it extended from the tower of Junquera on the sea coast to the Passo d'Arcos on the Tagus, about 3,000 yards in all; behind it was an entrenched camp, within which stood the fort of San Julian. Having indicated the general design of these stupendous works, he left it to be carried out by Lieut.-Colonel Richard Fletcher of the Royal Engineers. How splendidly, yet how secretly, that officer performed his part was soon to be seen.* Once only, in January, 1810, did Wellington re-visit the ground to satisfy himself that his instructions were being carried out. Neither to his Generals, nor to the Secretary of State, did he divulge his plans, so clearly did he foresee that their success depended on secrecy.† ANN. 1810.

Lord Charles Stewart, Adjutant-General to the British army in the Peninsula, was in England on leave at this time. Wellington wrote to him candidly but cheerfully, explaining the difficulties he had to encounter.

* It might be supposed that the mind of a commander might have been filled with a gigantic design such as this, and with preparations for the coming struggle, to the exclusion of minor matters of discipline and regulations. It was not so. Nothing is more remarkable than the quickness with which Wellington always perceived and checked any irregularity. At the very time, for example, when he was planning the lines of Torres Vedras (11th October) he happened, when riding into Lisbon, to meet a commissariat cart drawn by four mules and escorted by a dragoon. He stopped and asked what it contained, and, on being informed that it was the baggage of an officer of dragoons, was very angry. On reaching Lisbon he sent a long despatch to General Payne, reminding him that officers were required to provide carriage of their own baggage, and that it was most improper to employ soldiers in escorting private property (*Despatches*, v. 212).

† Lord John Russell was travelling in Spain at this time, and has sketched his impressions of these famous defences: "Never was I more struck than with the physical, military, and political spectacle before me. Standing on the highest point, and looking around him on every side, was the English General, his eyes bright and searching as those of an eagle, his countenance full of hope" (*Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 10). The following autumn Lord John, being at Howick, bet Lord Ponsonby a guinea that that time next year Wellington would still hold the lines of Torres Vedras. Lord Grey thought the bet a foolish one, citing Marlborough's feat in piercing the *ne plus ultra* of Marshal Villars; but Lord Ponsonby had to pay up.

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ÆT. 40.

"Visen, 28th February, 1810.

". . . There is no doubt that the task which I have undertaken is Herculean, particularly now that the Spanish armies are all annihilated, and that there is nothing in the shape of an army in the field but ourselves. I think that I am in such a situation that I can retire and embark when I please, and if that be the case I cannot but feel that the longer I stay the better for the cause and the more honourable to the country. . . . The necessity of keeping my rear open to the Tagus is a difficulty; and I should be able to effect my object with greater ease, if I was not under the necessity of effecting everything not only without loss, but without risk, or even the appearance of risk, in order to please the good people who make themselves judges of these matters in England." *

All the military resources of Portugal called out.

These great fortifications—the celebrated lines of Torres Vedras—were intended not only to protect the capital, but for the execution of a project far more vast; one of a nature which nothing but iron necessity could justify—nothing but an iron will could carry into effect. Claiming the exercise of his full power as Marshal-General of Portugal, and, despite the opposition of the *fidalgos*, Wellington called to arms the entire male population of the kingdom; so that by the end of May, 1810, 430,000 men were numbered, and armed in one fashion or another—50,000 being reckoned as regular troops, 50,000 as militia, and the rest *ordenanças* or guerillas.† Thirty thousand of the regulars were armed, disciplined, officered, and paid by the English Government. Wellington issued a proclamation requiring all persons whose lands and houses lay in whatever district the enemy should travel through, to withdraw before them, towards the capital, and, on being ordered to do so, to destroy every kind of property that they could not carry off in their flight, to burn their mills, break down their bridges, drive off their cattle—in short, to create a desert in which the French could find no subsistence of any kind. This policy was neither punitive, like the

* Original at Wynyard Park. † *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 518.

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"military execution" of Bavaria by Marlborough, the desolation of the Palatinate by Turenne, or the wasting of Georgia by General Sherman; neither was it wanton and shortsighted, like the pillaging of friendly Navarre permitted by the Black Prince; it was deliberate and effective, like the devastation of his own realm by Robert Bruce in the Scottish war of Independence, and like that by which the defence of Russia was hereafter to be successfully maintained against the Emperor Napoleon. ANN. 1810.

The war in Spain lost nothing as it proceeded of its initial ferocity. Soult invaded Andalusia in January, 1810; Seville, with its arsenal and enormous stores, Granada, Malaga, fell successively into the hands of the French; but always on the skirts of their armies hung bands of indomitable patriots. These, by their activity and unquenchable spirit, showed what splendid troops might have been manufactured out of the peasantry, who, in the absence of capable officers, degenerated into murderous bandits, and incurred the utmost penalty attached to brigandage. Soult issued a proclamation setting forth that, whereas no regular army could exist in Spain save that of his Catholic Majesty Joseph Napoleon, every Spaniard taken with arms in his hands should be immediately shot. It can never be known how many victims perished under this inhuman edict.* The Spanish Government retaliated by an ordinance that for every Spaniard thus executed, and for every house burned, three Frenchmen should be hanged. Such was the character of the warfare which, while the almonds were shedding their blossoms and the song birds were building their nests, was steadily rolling towards the frontier of Portugal.

On the 26th April Wellington, apprised of the fall of

* General Augereau's proclamation 18th December, 1809, ran as follows: "Every Catalan taken with arms in his hands, twenty-four hours after the present proclamation, shall be hanged without form of trial as a highway robber. Any house in which resistance is offered shall be burned: all shall undergo the same fate."

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Æt. 40. Astorga on the 22nd, and of Marshal Ney's movement upon Ciudad Rodrigo, transferred his headquarters to Celorico, and re-arranged his divisions along the frontier, still leaving General Hill to watch the approaches of the Tagus. Masséna was advancing against the frontier with 86,000 men, having reserves at Valladolid, Benevente, and Asturias, amounting to 52,000 more—in all 138,000 effectives.* To stem this armed torrent Wellington could only reckon on 32,000 regulars on the frontier of Beira.†

Masséna's advance.

There were three routes by which Masséna might advance on Lisbon: the first by Lower Beira, the second through the Alemtejo by Elvas, the third through Galicia in the north. Dismissing the last as improbable because of the difficulty offered by mountain ranges, and the second because it would lead the invaders to the wrong side of the Tagus, Wellington made his dispositions to meet Masséna on the first route. At the same time he took a very high hand with the Portuguese Regency, in consequence of their indolence in supplying the army with transport and supplies.

"If they expect that individuals of the lower orders are to relinquish the pursuit of their private interests and business to serve the public, and mean to punish them for any omission in this important duty, they must begin with the higher classes of society. These must be forced to perform their duty, and no name, however illustrious, and no protection, however powerful, should shield from punishment those who neglect the performance of their duty to the public in these times." ‡

* *Napier*, iii. 576. Extract from the Imperial Muster Rolls.

† See his own estimate (*Despatches*, vii. 292), but this left out of account between 12,000 and 13,000 men under General Hill, who was brought up in time for the battle of Busaco. On 1st June Wellington had 17,000 British and 14,000 Portuguese rank and file under his immediate command behind the Coa. There were besides 10,000 men in garrisons or unfit to be brought into the field. Napier (iii. 257) says that "the actual force at the disposition of Lord Wellington, the ordenanças being set aside, cannot be estimated higher than 80,000 men." It is difficult to reconcile the discrepancy between Wellington's figures and Napier's, unless the former took no account of militia, which the latter did.

‡ *Despatches*, vi. 97.

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Masséna began the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo early in June. Already he was experiencing the difficulty of maintaining his host in a hostile country; Regnier's corps was detached to the south of the Tagus, where it might find subsistence more easily, and Ciudad Rodrigo was invested by two corps, being defended by General Herrasti with a garrison of 5,000. It was at first Wellington's intention and earnest desire to succour this place; it was a bitter trial when he realised that it must be left to its fate. The Spaniards always fought splendidly behind walls; the siege was conducted so near the British position that men on outpost duty could hear even the crackle of musketry. The Marquess Romana came up from Badajos to implore Wellington to undertake a combined movement in order to raise the siege; hardest of all to resist was the appeal of gallant old Herrasti himself, conveyed in a note smuggled through the French lines by a Spaniard —"*O venir luego! luego! luego! a secorrer esta plaza;*" * and again two days later, on 1st July—"*Luego! luego! luego! por ultimo vez.*" Men ignorant of the British commander's great design chafed at his seeming indifference to the fate of the beleaguered garrison. Masséna sent out proclamations taunting the Spaniards for relying on such a craven ally. The Spanish authorities of Castille were so furious at Wellington's apathy that they broke off all communication with him, refusing even to forward intelligence obtained by British agents. But Wellington remained firm. In his own words—

ANN. 1810.

Masséna invests Ciudad Rodrigo.

> "It was impracticable to attempt it, unless it could be supposed that we should beat an army nearly double the strength of the allied army, having nearly four times the number of cavalry, in a country admirably adapted to the use of that arm." †

Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered on 11th July, and the French moved on to attack Almeida, near which place lay General

Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo.

* "O come now! now! now! to succour this place."

† *Despatches*, vii. 293.

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ÆT. 41. Craufurd's division. The Spaniards, on hearing of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, marched off in disgust to join Romana's army, leaving Craufurd with 4,000 British infantry, 1,100 cavalry, and 6 guns. Wellington had repeatedly enjoined him not to risk an action beyond the Coa;* nevertheless, he deliberately awaited the attack of Ney's corps in this position. His disobedience nearly caused the loss of his division, which would certainly have been fatal to the continuance of a British force in Portugal.†

General Craufurd disregards his orders.

At daybreak on 24th July, after a night of drenching rain, Ney drew near with 24,000 foot, 5,000 horse, and 30 guns. Craufurd most rashly sent forward his guns and cavalry, which were speedily driven in. Loison's division then charged and broke the British line, and Ney ordered Montbrun to pursue with his cavalry. Most fortunately for the Light Division, Montbrun stood on his dignity. Holding an independent command from Masséna, he declined to move except at his orders. General Picton had ridden out from Pinhel to view the fighting. Craufurd, feeling himself hard pressed, rode up to him and asked whether he would not move out something to support him. There was no love lost between the Welshman and the Scot: Picton replied bluffly that "he'd be damned if he did any such thing," on which Craufurd, making an angry retort, rode away.‡ Montbrun's aloofness gave the Light Division time to re-form; they retired fighting—and Craufurd's lads *could* fight!—to the

* *Despatches*, v. 460, 472; vi. 222, 274; vii. 294.

† *Viscount Wellington to the Right Hon. W. W. Pole.*

". . . Although I shall be hanged for them, you may be very certain that not only I have had nothing to do with, but had positively forbidden, the foolish affairs in which Craufurd involved his outposts. . . . You will say, if this be the case, why not accuse Craufurd? I answer, because, if I am to be hanged for it, I cannot accuse a man who I believe has meant well, and whose error is one of judgment, and not of intention; and indeed I must add that . . . that is not the way in which any, much less a British army, can be commanded" (*Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 564).

‡ *Napier*, v. p. vi.

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bridge, effected a crossing, and then, by sheer steadiness of fire, kept the French in check till four in the afternoon. The British and Portuguese loss was 316 killed, wounded, and missing, including 28 officers; that of the French, who suffered severely in repeated attacks on the bridge, was much heavier. ANN. 1810.

Capitulation of Almeida.

Ney then invested Almeida, which was reputed the strongest fortress in Portugal, and was expected to make a good defence; but a terrific explosion took place in the magazine, and the citadel capitulated on 27th August.

Proclamations by Wellington and Masséna.

The invading and defending armies were now at last in contact, and the commander of each issued a proclamation to the Portuguese. That of Masséna set forth that the French came, not as conquerors, but as friends; that of Wellington appealed to the people whether the burning and plundering, the ravishing and murdering, which the French carried on wherever they went, had not convinced them of the true nature of the invasion. He called on them once more, on pain of punishment as traitors, to withdraw from their homes on the approach of the enemy, removing all that could be of use to the French, and destroying what could not be removed.

Impatience of the Portuguese Government.

At this time the Portuguese Government adopted a line of conduct exceedingly harassing to Wellington. Their extreme anxiety for their country was pardonable: the extent of their confidence in the British General up to the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo had been almost pathetic. All that he had had to complain of was indolence in complying with his orders and in furnishing supplies. Now, however, under the instigation of the Principal Souza, an energetic, but ignorant and meddlesome person, the Regency began to interfere with the movements of armies in the field, and desired that an immediate advance should be made into Spain. Souza and his party saw in Wellington's refusal to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida a confirmation of the suspicion that his demonstration against Masséna was no more than a cloak to cover his own embarkation, and the

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ÆT. 41. abandonment of Portugal to her fate. It cannot be denied that there was ground for this suspicion. Many of Wellington's own officers were not careful to conceal their desire for immediate evacuation;* even Sir George Murray urged him strongly against trusting to the lines, which he felt sure would be forced.† English newspapers were read in Lisbon, and English merchants were leaving the city which they believed to be doomed. The populace readily listened to Souza's inflammatory harangues, and the situation in Lisbon became exceedingly uneasy. Wellington told Mr. Stuart,‡ who had succeeded Mr. Villiers as British Minister in Lisbon, that he would suffer no interference with military operations.

October 10, 1810.—"As for Principal Souza, I beg you to tell him from me . . . that being embarked in a series of military operations, of which I hope to see the successful termination, I shall continue to carry them on to their end; but that no power on earth shall induce me to remain in the Peninsula for one moment, after I shall have obtained his Majesty's leave to resign my charge, if Principal Souza is to remain either a member of the Government or to continue at Lisbon. . . . All I ask of the

* "The temper of some of the officers of the British army gives me more concern than the folly of the Portuguese Government. I have always been accustomed to have the confidence and support of the officers of the armies which I commanded; but, for the first time, whether owing to the Opposition in England, or whether the magnitude of the concern is too much for their minds and their nerves, or whether I am mistaken, and they are right, I cannot tell; but there is a system of croaking in the army which is highly injurious to the public service. . . . Officers have a right to form their own opinions upon events and transactions, but officers of high rank or situation ought to keep their opinions to themselves: if they do not approve of the system of operations of their commander, they ought to withdraw from the army" (*Lord Wellington to Mr. Stuart*, 11th September, 1810: *Despatches*, vi. 403).

"If some of them held the command, the army would long ere now have been in the transports" (*Lord Wellington to Lord Liverpool*, 13th September, 1810: *Despatches*, vi. 411).

† *Salisbury MSS.*, 1837.

‡ Afterwards Lord Stuart de Rothesay.

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Portuguese Regency is—tranquillity in the town of Lisbon and provisions *for their own troops.*" * ANN. 1810.

For nearly three weeks after the surrender of Almeida there was no movement of importance in the French army. It must be admitted that Wellington was not entitled to reckon on this inaction. Had Ney taken the offensive earlier, Hill's corps could not have been brought in to strengthen the allied army; indeed, that General anticipated orders which Wellington sent to him on the 15th September, and, as soon as he became aware of Regnier's movement to join Masséna, began a series of forced marches and arrived on the Alva on the 21st.

The French began their advance into Portugal on 16th September with 72,000 men, moving by three routes—Regnier's corps marching by Guarda and Celorico, Ney's by Alverca, and Junot's by Pinhel and Trancoso. On the 21st the three columns effected a junction at Viseu; Wellington, falling back before them, was joined on the Alva by General Hill on the same day.† The total force of the Allies present at the front was then 49,000—of which 25,175 were British and the rest Portuguese. **Masséna invades Portugal.**

The unsatisfactory state of public feeling in Lisbon, the neglect of the injunction to displenish the country of supplies for the enemy, the murmurs of his own officers, and the demoralising effect of a protracted passive strategy upon his men, induced Wellington to interrupt his retreat towards the final stronghold he had prepared. Just below the confluence of the Alva with the Mondego, mountains approach

* *Despatches*, vi. 467.

† *The Emperor Napoleon to the Minister of the Interior.*

"Fontainebleau, 13th October, 1810.

". . . The army of Portugal . . . has more than 70,000 men under arms. It has seized Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and was face to face on the 24th with the English army, which it had forced to retire for ten marches, and which seemed to be falling back on its vessels. A battle was imminent, and the English were reinforcing their army, which amounted, possibly, to some 36,000 men" (*Lettres inédites*, p. 209).

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Æt. 41. closely to both banks of the main river. On the right or north-west bank rises the Sierra Busaco, a precipitous ridge stretching for about eight miles at right angles to the line of Masséna's advance upon the important town of Coimbra, where Wellington had his magazine. Upon this natural fortress Wellington decided to stand at bay, the great superiority of the French cavalry being neutralised by the nature of the ground. The only doubt was whether Masséna would not attempt to turn, rather than to force, such a strong position.*

On the 21st, General Pack, holding with his brigade an advanced post on the Criz, a tributary of the Mondego, destroyed the bridges before the French advanced guard, and fell back to Mortagoa, where he joined Craufurd's Light Division. On the two following days, Craufurd's pickets having been driven in by the enemy's skirmishers, he withdrew four miles to a very strong position in advance of the general line, whence he had clear orders from Wellington to retire in good time.† Nevertheless, on the approach of two French columns on the 25th, Craufurd, unable to restrain his impatience to be at them, moved down into the plain, and his skirmishers were actually engaged when Wellington galloped up and ordered a retreat, accompanying the division

* Masséna would have got into disgrace if he had declined battle. On 19th September Berthier wrote: "The Emperor orders me to send you an officer to inform you of his intention that you should attack and overthrow the English. Lord Wellington has not more than 18,000 men. . . . General Hill has not more than 6,000. . . . His Majesty thinks it ridiculous that 25,000 English should balance 60,000 French, and that by falling boldly on, after carefully reconnoitring, you cannot fail to check them severely."

Three weeks later, when Masséna sent General Foy to Paris to explain his position before the lines of Torres Vedras and his urgent need of reinforcements, he represented to the Emperor that his attack on Busaco had been merely a feint to enable him to turn the position by way of the pass of Boyalva, and that it had only become a serious engagement in consequence of the ardour of the French troops. This was a deliberate deception. In Masséna's original despatch immediately after the battle, which was intercepted by the Allies, there was not a word of all this afterthought!

† *Despatches*, vi. 440.

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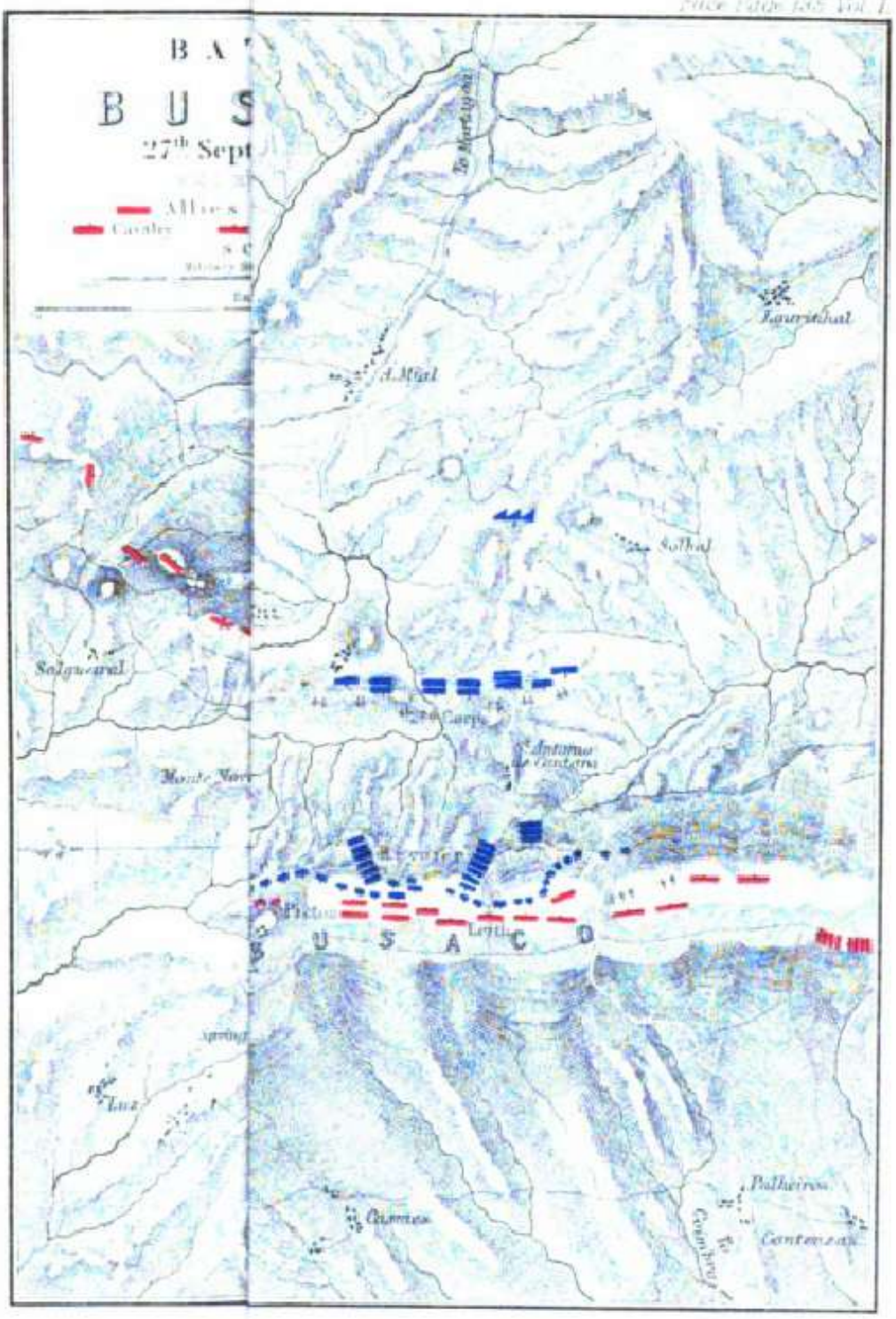

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back to its proper position in the line. Well was it that he did so. Craufurd's fierce gallantry was most apt to expose the troops under his command to terrible risks, and on this occasion he was on the point of engaging the whole of the 2nd and 6th French Corps under Regnier and Ney. ANN. 1810.

On the 26th the enemy was strengthened by the arrival of Masséna himself with the 8th Corps, and the light troops were engaged all along the line. Battle of Busaco.

"My regiment," wrote an officer in Hill's division, "had no sooner piled arms than I walked to the verge of the mountain on which we lay, in the hope that I might discover something of the enemy. Little was I prepared for the magnificent scene which burst on my astonished sight. Far as the eye could stretch, the glittering of steel and clouds of dust raised by cavalry and artillery proclaimed the march of a countless army; while immediately below me, at the feet of those precipitous heights on which I stood, their pickets were already posted. Thousands of them were already halted in their bivouacks; column after column, arriving in quick succession, reposed upon the ground allotted to them, and swelled the black and enormous masses. . . . The whole country behind them seemed covered with their train, their ambulance and their commissariat." *

At 6 a.m. on the 27th the enemy began the attack in force. The front of the Allies extended for more than five miles along the comb of the ridge, scarcely visible to the French moving below them. General Hill held the right nearest the river; General Leith lay next, with the Lusitanian Legion in reserve; the 3rd Division under Picton, supported by a Portuguese brigade, prolonged the line to the left; and on the left of Picton was Brent Spencer's division, with Lowry Cole's division, the 4th, forming the left of the line. The Light Division, with Coleman's and Pack's Portuguese brigades, were posted half a mile in advance of the left, supported by a German brigade. The ground being unsuitable for his cavalry, Wellington sent them to a position in

* *Recollections of the Peninsula*, 107.

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Æt. 41.

rear of the left, where the land was more level, keeping a single regiment of heavy dragoons on the heights. The French advanced in five columns of attack, three being under Ney on the right, and two under Regnier three miles to the left. Regnier, having the easier ground, advanced more quickly than Ney, and, with astonishing speed and dash, his left column stormed the height and forced back the right of the 3rd Division. Never was there a finer display of disciplined valour than the performance of these heroes of Austerlitz. Wheeling to the right, one of the French divisions formed across Picton's broken flank. Lieut.-Colonel Waller, assistant quartermaster-general with the 2nd Division, perceiving the frightful jeopardy of the whole British position, and that the great road to Coimbra was unmasked by the disorder of the 3rd Division, galloped along to the right on the reverse side of the Sierra in search of support. The first troops he met were the head of Leith's column, then taking ground to its left.

The British line broken.

"Pray, sir, who commands this brigade?" he asked an officer riding at the head of the 9th Regiment.

"I do, sir; I am Colonel Cameron."

"Then, for God's sake, sir, move off instantly at the double quick to Picton's support. Not a moment is to be lost. The enemy have forced our right. Move on till the rear of your brigade has passed the Coimbra road; then wheel into line and you will embrace the point of attack."

Without a moment's hesitation Colonel Cameron pushed on at the double in column of sections, left in front, across two miles of very rough ground. Arriving at the point indicated by Colonel Waller, he wheeled his brigade into line and moved to the crest of the ridge. Picton, by this time, had done much to repair the evil, or at least to prevent the worst consequences of his reverse. He fired upon the French division with two guns, and then sent the 45th and 88th Regiments and the 8th Portuguese to charge them with the bayonet.

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"I have never witnessed," wrote Wellington to the Secretary of State, "a more gallant attack than that made by the 88th, 45th, and 8th Portuguese regiments on the enemy's division which reached the ridge of the Serra." * ANN. 1810.

The leading French battalions, however, still crowned the height, the right resting on a precipice in rear of the British position, which was actually lost, had these been effectively supported. A thick mist which clung to the crest, mingled with smoke, concealed them from the left of the British line, which, moreover, had become engaged by this time with Ney's attack. In the nick of time came the 9th Regiment—the "Holy Boys," as they were termed—supported by the 38th and Royal Scots. The 9th, without firing a shot, advanced under a galling fire against the French among the rocks, cleared the ground, croup and crest, and, quickly occupied it with the rest of the brigade. Next, General Hill brought in his division from the right—"a magnificent spectacle it was," said an eye-witness,† "to see his 14,000 infantry moving steadily at the double in open columns;" and thus the line was once more united and the danger past.

No sooner was this accomplished than Wellington galloped up with his staff. "Hill," said he in quick, incisive accents, but without the slightest fuss or flurry, "if they attempt this point again, you will give them a volley, and charge bayonets; but don't let your people follow them too far down the hill." ‡ Then, wheeling round, he vanished in the smoke on his way to survey the divisions on the left. These had held their ground with greater ease than their comrades of the 3rd Division. One of Ney's columns, indeed, topped the ridge—a splendid performance in face of a crushing fire of artillery and musketry—driving in the British Rifles and Portuguese Caçadores. But behind his skirmishers, Craufurd

Repulse of Ney's attack.

* *Despatches*, vi. 447. Many witnesses, however, testified that the 8th Portuguese were utterly broken, and ran down the reverse side of the ridge.

† *Recollections*, 109. ‡ *Ibid.*, 110.

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Æt. 41. held two battalions deployed in concealment under the comb of the ridge. A sharp command from him, and this thin red line moved forward; another—a long gleam flamed down the ranks as the bayonets dropped from the shoulder; a third—and, with a cheer that made the rocks ring again, the famous 43rd and 52nd swept forward to the charge, rolling back the advancing tide, overlapping its flanks, and hurling the assailants over the steep brow. Then the bugles sounded the halt; three withering volleys were poured upon the descending mass, and the hillside was strewn with hundreds of dead and dying.

Thus repulsed along his whole line Masséna did not renew the attack. His troops had shown splendid alacrity and valour; he had lost between four and five thousand officers and men, and he decided that the position of Busaco was impregnable. The battle was practically over by two o'clock, though fighting continued between the light troops till the evening, when the French retired to the ground they had occupied in the morning.

Moral effect of the victory.

The moral effects of this victory on the cause of the Allies and the spirit of their troops were immediate and invigorating. The Portuguese, hitherto despised and distrusted, had shown that they only required proper training and handling to render an excellent account of themselves: their behaviour at Busaco received high praise in Wellington's despatches. The "croakers" among the British officers, always a considerable body in numbers, were put to temporary silence.* The British loss, owing to the excellence of their position, was comparatively trifling, amounting, in the fighting on 25th, 26th, and 27th September, only to 197 killed, 1,014 wounded, and 58 missing. "A political battle" it has been called†—a battle contrary to the general design of the campaign, fought to propitiate the Portuguese Regency and the British Cabinet and press—but "policy" were an apter term than "politics" to explain Wellington's

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi 607. † *Napier*, iii. 345.

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motive in fighting. *En guerre*, some French writer has observed, *l'art ne consiste pas à frapper fort, ni à frapper souvent, mais à frapper juste.* As a fox-hunter, Wellington understood the policy of "blooding his hounds." He saw the spirits of his soldiers drooping under inaction and retrograde movement; discipline flagged, and the temptation to plunder became irresistible. He blooded his hounds at Busaco. ANN. 1810.

Unluckily, his warnings to the Regency and his instructions to the inhabitants had been disregarded. The people of Coimbra and neighbourhood had made no attempt to withdraw their cattle and movables; hence when Masséna, foiled in his attempt to force the Sierra Busaco, penetrated the defiles of Boyalva and debouched upon the fertile district near Coimbra, he found plenty of supplies. Wellington had detached Colonel Trant with his Portuguese, foreseeing that Masséna would probably attempt to turn the British left by a flank movement through the Sierra de Caramula, to occupy the pass of Boyalva; but General Silveira, nervous for the safety of Oporto, had interfered by summoning Trant to protect that town. Masséna, therefore, passed through the difficult ground unmolested, and Wellington, to preserve his communications, fell back upon Coimbra. Retiring thence on 1st October, skirmishing with the enemy's advanced guard, he lay for three days at Leiria, which were wasted by Masséna in plundering Coimbra, thus losing all the advantage he had gained by his flank march through Boyalva. The Allies resume their retreat.

Wellington's one desire was to lure on his adversary to pursuit. Had Masséna made a permanent base at Coimbra, seized Oporto on his right rear and Abrantes on his left front, the advance of a corps detached by Soult from the south must have endangered the whole issue of the campaign for the Allies. All, however, went according to Wellington's plan. On the 4th October the French drove the British pickets out of Pombal, and the rear-guard out of Leiria on the 5th. The Allies steadily yielded ground, engaging in

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Æt. 41. daily, but partial, encounters with the enemy. They were accompanied and preceded by the whole population of the district, who, maddened by terror at the approach of the French, afforded a scene of destitution and misery which it were hard to depict. It was the time of the vintage—the season that ought to have filled that lovely land with festival and heartsome, fruitful labour. Instead of that, the fields were silent and deserted; the purple clusters shrivelled and rotted ungathered; multitudes of birds collected, some to feed on the grapes with unwonted impunity, others, unclean and ominous, to batten on the flesh of man and beast.

"The multitude of sufferers increased as the army approached Lisbon. The wayside was strewn with articles of furniture, which the wretched fugitives were unable to carry further. Those who, in the weariness of exhausted nature, had cast themselves on the ground, started up with unnatural and convulsive energy to renew their journey, on learning that the enemy's columns were approaching. . . . By no one who bore part in that memorable retreat can it ever be forgotten. Other scenes may fade in the change of succeeding years, or perish utterly from the memory—the impression of this can only be effaced by death." *

Improved discipline of the British soldiers.

Of the behaviour of his own troops, however, Wellington was able to report far more favourably than during the retreat from Talavera, although he found it necessary to check sternly some disorder which took place at Condeixa and Leiria. At the latter place, two men of the 4th Dragoons whom the Commander of the Forces caught in the act of plundering a chapel, were hanged, as well as a private in the 11th Foot and a Portuguese soldier.† If the sternness of Wellington's discipline inspired his officers and soldiers with dread, rather than with the affection they had borne to the gentler Moore, at least it averted the calamity of insubordination which had so grievously augmented the suffering during

* *Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns*, by T. Hamilton, 29th Regiment.

† *Tomkinson*, 48; *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 606.

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the retreat to Coruña. "You are hanged," was the pregnant observation of Judge Broxfield in passing sentence on a sheep-stealer, "not for stealing a sheep, but that sheep may not be stolen." Wellington succeeded in the end; he made his army one that "could go anywhere and do anything;" but he earned more fear than love in the process.* He was generally known among his men at this time as "Arty"—the short for Arthur—or, more descriptively, as "that long-nosed —— that licks the parley-voos." ANN. 1810

Among the French Masséna allowed, and even encouraged, in Portugal far greater license than he permitted in Spain; his troops became greatly demoralised, and the reckless waste of stores at Coimbra brought severe privations upon them. He left his hospitals at Coimbra under a weak guard. No sooner was his back turned than Colonel Trant swooped upon the town with his Portuguese militiamen, surprising and capturing it, and taking 5,000 prisoners and a large quantity of arms; while General Miller and Colonel Wilson seized hill posts on both banks of the Mondego, completely severing the French communications.

Up to this moment few, if any, of the British officers were apprised of the nature of the refuge Colonel Fletcher and Captain Chapman had been preparing for the allied army and the fugitive population; friend and foe alike believed that Wellington was making for his ships.

"I believe," wrote Wellington to the Minister in Lisbon on 6th October, "you and the Government do not know where the lines are. Those round Lisbon are not those in which I shall place the army, but those extending from Torres Vedras to the Tagus. All I ask from the Government is tranquillity in the town of Lisbon and provisions for their own troops; and as God Almighty does not give 'the race to the swift or the battle to the strong,' and I have fought enough battles to know that, even

* "There is but one way—to do as I did—to have A HAND OF IRON. The moment there was the slightest neglect in any department, I was down on them" (*Salisbury MSS.*, 1837).

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Æt. 41. under the best arrangements, the result of any one is not certain, I only beg that they will adopt preparatory arrangements to take out of the enemy's way those persons who would suffer if they were to fall into his hands." *

The secret had been kept right well: the surprise was dramatically complete. Not before the evening of 10th October, when the French drove a British detachment out of Sabral, did Masséna realise the existence of those tremendous works which received the allied columns. Among all the suffering millions of Portugal not a spy had been found to warn the invader of the existence in his line of march of fifty miles of new fortification, comprising 126 closed works and mounting 247 guns.† Let the loyalty of this devoted people never be forgotten; in the annals of patriotism there is nothing grander than their fiery, sustained refusal to submit to a foreign yoke.

It is true that Masséna had Portuguese officers in his service. The Marquis d'Alorna and General Pamplona, in particular, were high in the councils of the enemies of their country. When Masséna came before the lines of Torres Vedras he accused these gentlemen of having deceived him. They replied that the means of ascertaining what Wellington was about were at the Marshal's disposal, not at theirs. "*Que diable!*" exclaimed Masséna angrily, "*Wellington n'a pas construit ces montagnes.*" He had not been warned of the existence of the natural, still less of the artificial, impediments to his advance.‡

"Such a mass of troops intrenched in positions so formidable, having in their rear the safe and spacious harbour of Lisbon, and affording the opportunity for bringing the maritime power and wealth of England to support her soldiers in the field, offers to the attention of mankind the most wonderful combination of circumstances that can be found in the military annals of the world." §

* *Despatches*, vi. 468.
† *Ibid.*, vi. 520.
‡ *Stanhope*, 162.
§ Belmas, *Journeaux des Sièges*, i. 135.

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Masséna was in the trap. By the end of October 29,000 British, 24,000 Portuguese, and 5,000 Spanish troops were collected within the lines of Torres Vedras, nearly 60,000 in all, while a strong reinforcement of British marines were close at hand. Death, desertion, and sickness had reduced Masséna's army to little more than 50,000; cut off from their base they possessed, to quote Wellington's own words, no more than the ground they stood on.* Inside the lines there was abundance of food; outside, the resources of the country soon gave out, the troops suffered severely from want, and the French foraging parties were attacked almost daily by bodies of militia outside the lines. In fact, had the grain and cattle been removed as Wellington had desired, the invading army could not have remained in its position for a week. As it was, their privations were very severe, and the suffering they inflicted on those inhabitants who had rashly remained in their homes were indescribable. There is the authority of a French military writer for the shocking statement, which has never been contradicted, that Masséna allowed detachments to go out to collect all girls between twelve and thirty years of age for the use of his soldiers. "I saw," testified an English officer present with the army, "with my own eyes, when Masséna had retired from before the lines of Torres Vedras, forty or fifty of these wretches in a state of disease, famine, and *insanity*, beyond all conception." † ANN. 1810.

General de Marbot, who was present with the French army, has placed it on record that Masséna desired to attack the entrenchments without delay; that Junot, who knew Lisbon and its environs well, supported his view, as did Montbrun, but that Ney and Regnier had no stomach for it. In fact, he says that Masséna actually issued orders for an advance, and that Ney flatly refused to obey.‡

* *Despatches*, vii. 298.

† *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxv. 42, note.

‡ Masséna's own correspondence, however, does not show that he had any disposition to attack the lines. On 29th October, after he had lain twelve days

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Æt 41.

Masséna retires to Santarem.

In less than a month the French position could no longer be maintained. During the night of the 14th November, and under cover of a thick fog on the 15th, Masséna broke up and retired upon Santarem and Thomar. It was late in the day before the allied outposts perceived the movement, owing to the ruse of the French in leaving straw-stuffed figures representing sentries and videttes.* Believing the enemy to be in full retreat from Portugal, Wellington moved out of his lines and followed him closely; but, finding supplies more plentiful near Santarem, Masséna decided to await reinforcements in his new position, which the floods rendered it impossible to attack without very heavy loss. The Allies, therefore, went into cantonments between the mountains and the Tagus, occupying a position extending from Alcoentre to Villa Franca, with headquarters at Cartaxos.

It may be asked why Wellington, whose operative force now considerably exceeded that at Masséna's disposal, did not assume the offensive before his opponent's reinforcements could arrive. His reasons are clearly explained in his despatches; the French were always able in that country of natural strongholds to take up such positions as could not be attacked without risk nor carried without loss. Warned as he had been repeatedly by the Secretary of State to incur neither risk nor unnecessary loss, the following passages from Wellington's correspondence with that minister furnish an effective defence alike against those critics who have compared his strategy unfavourably with that of Marlborough,†

before them, he wrote to Berthier: "I have not thought it right to attack entrenchments armed with a formidable artillery, and occupied by an enemy of double our numbers; that would have given him too much advantage, and I should have compromised the Emperor's army. . . . I remain in my position in hopes that the Portuguese refugees in Lisbon will make a movement against the English . . . or that Lord Wellington will come out of his entrenchments to receive or give battle."

* *Kincaid.*

† Even Brialmont, a warm panegyrist of Wellington, blames him because he exhibited at the commencement of the French retreat some dispositions to delay,

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and against those who have judged him indifferent to the lives and health of his soldiers. ANN. 1810.

"27th October, 1810.

". . . I think the sure game, and that in which I am likely to lose fewest men, the most consistent with my instructions and the intentions of the King's Government: and I therefore prefer to wait the attack. Besides, although I have the advantage of numbers, the enemy are in a very good position, which I could not turn with any large force, without laying open my own rear and the road to the sea. This is the worst of all these strong countries, that they afford equally good positions to both sides." *

"3rd November, 1810.

"I cannot but be of opinion that I act in conformity with the instructions and intentions of his Majesty's Government, in waiting for the result of what is going on, and in incurring no extraordinary risk. Every day's delay at this season of the year narrows our line of defence, and consequently strengthens it; and when the winter shall have set in, no number, however formidable, can venture to attack it: and the increase of the enemy's numbers will only add to their distress, and increase the difficulties of their retreat. . . . If I should make any attack, the advantage must be very obvious before I adopt a measure which must be attended by the consequence of losing the services of my men by sickness." †

"December 21st.

". . . The question whether I should attack the enemy in the position which he now occupies has been well considered by me. I have a superior army, I think, by 10,000 men, or one-sixth, including the Spaniards; and notwithstanding some defects in its composition, I think I should succeed. But the loss must necessarily be very great in killed and wounded, and . . . exposing the troops to the weather for some days and nights

and even to hesitate, in following up Masséna's columns. Napier observes caustically that "Lord Wellington's experience in the movement of great armies was not, at this period, equal to his adversary's."

* *Despatches*, vi. 528. † *Ibid.*, vi. 555.

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Æt. 41. would throw a great proportion of this convalescent army into the hospital. Then what is to be gained in this action, in which failure would be the loss of the whole cause?" *

"29th December.

". . . Whatever may be Masséna's opinion of his chance of success in an attack upon the allied army, I am convinced he will make it if he receives the order from Paris. . . . Having such an enemy to contend with, and, knowing as I do, that there is no army in the Peninsula capable of contending with the enemy, excepting that under my command; that there are no means of repairing any large losses I may sustain . . . I have determined to persevere in the system which has hitherto saved all. . . . I entertain no doubt of the final success of the measures which I am carrying on: and, at all events, I am certain that they are the only measures which can be entirely successful." †

At the close of 1810 the army lost the services for a time of General Robert Craufurd, who, in spite of Wellington's dissuasion,‡ insisted on going home to England on leave. The Light Division was placed under the feeble command of Sir William Erskine, of whom Charles Napier observed in one of his letters home that he was the laughing-stock of the whole army, and especially of the Light Division. It is only fair, however, to Erskine's memory to mention that he had been mentally deranged and confined for two years, and that in 1813 he attempted to destroy himself in a frenzy by throwing himself out of a window at Freneda.

Wellington used to complain down to the very close of his active military life, at the system of appointing officers to high command, irrespectively of their professional merit, and without consulting the General under whom they were to serve in the field. Erskine's appointment was the occasion of a more vigorous remonstrance than usual.

* *Despatches*, vii. 52. † *Ibid.*, vii. 79. ‡ *Ibid.*, 34.

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Viscount Wellington to Colonel Torrens, Military Secretary. ANN. 1810.

"Celorico, 29th August, 1810.

"I have received your letter announcing the appointment of Erskine, —— and —— to this army. The first I have generally understood to be a madman; I believe it is your own opinion that the second is not very wise; the third will, I believe, be a useful man. But I should be glad to get rid of a few of the same description with —— and ——; and there are some in this army which it is disreputable and quite unsafe to keep. Colonel ——, whose memorial I enclose, who was sent away from —— for incapacity, and whom I was very glad to get rid of from hence last year, has lately come out again. I have been obliged to appoint him to the Staff because he is senior to others; and I wished to keep him away and prevent him from spoiling a good regiment by joining it; and he remains at a distance till further orders as perpetual President of General Courts-Martial. Then there is ——, whose conduct is really scandalous. I am not able to bring him before a court-martial, as I should wish, but he is a disgrace to the army which can have such a man as a major-general. Really when I reflect upon the characters and attainments of some of the general officers of this army, and consider that these are the persons on whom I am to rely to lead columns against the French Generals, and who are to carry my instructions into execution, I tremble. . . . —— and —— will be a very nice addition to this list! However, I pray God and the Horse Guards to deliver me from General —— and Colonel ——." *

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 582.

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CHAPTER IX.

The Overthrow of Masséna.

1810–1811.

1810. Position and condition of the two armies.

December 21 . . . Soult moves north to support Masséna.

January 27, 1811. He invests Badajos.

March 5 . . . . . Masséna retreats from Santarem.

„ 11 . . . . . Treasonable surrender of Badajos.

Usefulness of Portuguese spies.

Smartness of British cavalry in reconnoitring.

„ . . . . . Soult returns to the South.

„ 15 . . . . . Affair at Foz d'Aronce.

Dissension among the French commanders.

„ 22 . . . . . Marshal Ney removed from his command.

„ 29 . . . . . Attack and capture of Guarda by the Allies.

April 3 . . . . . Combat of Sabugal.

Masséna is driven out of Portugal.

„ 20 . . . . . Wellington leaves his army to visit the Alemtejo.

May 2 . . . . . Masséna resumes the offensive.

„ 4 . . . . . Beresford lays siege to Badajos.

May 5 . . . . . Battle of Fuentes de Onoro.

„ 8 . . . . . Masséna retreats, and is removed from his command.

„ 10 . . . . . Escape of the garrison of Almeida.

„ 12 . . . . . Soult causes the siege of Badajos to be raised.

„ 16 . . . . . Battle of Albuera.

King Joseph leaves Madrid and renounces his crown.

Marmont assumes command of the army of Portugal.

„ 25 . . . . . Reinvestment of Badajos.

June 12 . . . . . The siege raised a second time.

The French retire from Estremadura.

Wellington blockades Ciudad Rodrigo.

September 21 . . Marmont advances to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo.

„ 24 . . Action at El Bodon.

„ 25 . General retreat of the Allies.

Withdrawal of the French.

The blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo is resumed.

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THE year 1810 drew to a close without any material difference in the relative positions of the two armies. While the hatred between the French invaders and the Portuguese patriots became, if possible, more intense, the best kind of understanding prevailed between British soldiers and their enemies. War was being conducted on the grand scale; French and English had no personal quarrel—no private wrongs to avenge; their outposts and sentries established most friendly relations; their officers exchanged compliments and good-humoured raillery across the rivulet which separated their respective lines. When the greyhounds of an English officer ran a hare within the French lines, they were returned under a flag of truce with a polite message.* Very seldom was there any fighting—only when a reconnaissance was undertaken on either side. On one of these rare occasions General Junot was badly wounded. Lord Wellington, knowing how ill-furnished were the French with comforts and hospital appliances, sent to inquire for him, offering to send anything he might require; but of course the French General would not admit the destitution of his camp by accepting any help.† Many such agreeable incidents varied the daily routine.

ANN. 1810.

Position and condition of the two armies.

"5th November, 1810.

"We are here without any idea of attacking or being attacked, with our videttes close to each other, and picquets whose sentries relieve by the same road. The French have double sentries, and when you approach near them they strike the butts of their firelocks, as if to say, 'We are here, and there is no use for both of us.' This has only taken place lately; at first our sentries and the French used to drink together. Our men, of course, got drunk; one of the Buffs left his firelock, which was brought after him by one of the Frenchmen. General Hill has, however, very wisely put a stop to this, and we are now perfectly polite, and not so disgustingly familiar. I was at our outposts yesterday;

* *Kincaid*, 37. † *Ibid.*, 38.

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Æt. 41. the French vidette saluted us, not with a shot, but by kissing his hand. Is not this civilised warfare?" *

Every morning, an hour before daybreak, the allied troops stood to arms, and remained so till a grey horse could be seen a mile off, when they were dismissed to breakfast.

Sufferings of the French.

Widely different, however, were the circumstances of those inside and outside the great lines. Within, there was abundance and repose, plenty of leisure for dancing, flirting, shooting, and other amusements; well-filled wine-skins and regular rations. Outside, the French forces, dwindling by disease, desertion, and incessant onslaughts by Portuguese ordenanças on their convoys and foraging parties, were harassed by incessant fatigues. A despatch could not be sent along their line of communications without an escort of 200 or 300 men; subsisting entirely on plunder, the invaders soon exhausted the resources of their neighbourhood, and had to send further and ever further afield for their subsistence. "Heaven forgive me," wrote a Portuguese spy to Wellington, from Santarem, "if I wrong them in believing they have eaten my cat!" † One cannot reflect without commiseration on the waste of these troops—hitherto the most splendid and devoted in Europe—sacrificed without compunction to gratify the ambition of one man. At last Masséna realised that he could no longer hold his ground. The despised "Hindoo General" had out-manœuvred him, beaten him in a pitched battle, and finally led him into a well-designed snare. British reinforcements were on the sea; retreat was the only means of saving the French army. Masséna had sent General Foy to Paris to lay before the Emperor the urgent necessity for reinforcements, but already Napoleon had made up his mind to war with Russia; he had in contemplation the mightiest invasion recorded in military history, and could spare no more men for the Peninsula. However, he sent orders to King Joseph to advance to Alcantara, and

* *Dumaresq MSS.* † *De Ros MS.*

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directed Soult to break up from Cadiz, in order to create a diversion by the invasion of Estremadura. Soult, though relieved by the uniform success during the winter of the French Generals against the severally gallant, but isolated and ill-advised efforts of the Spanish armies, was very unwilling to obey; nevertheless, on 21st December, 1810, he left Cadiz with 5,000 men, and, taking the 5th Corps from Seville, marched with 20,000 troops upon the south of the Tagus to open communications with Masséna. His advance, however, was slow, because, being more careful than Masséna about the safety of his rear, he undertook the reduction of Merida, Olivença, and Badajos. The Spanish Generals Mendizabal and Ballasteros held the bridges on the Guadiana, which at that season was an impassable torrent, with 12,300 men; but the Junta marched Ballasteros away to the Condado de Niebla, and Mendizabal, when he heard of Soult's advance, retreated hurriedly without blowing up the bridges as he ought in common prudence to have done, and withdrew to Badajos and Olivença. Merida was not defended; Olivença surrendered after eight days' blockade on 23rd January, 1811; and Badajos was invested on the 27th. Mendizabal had been repeatedly urged by Wellington to fortify his own very strong position at Badajos;* but he neglected to do so, and on being attacked by 5,800 French on 19th February, his force of 11,500 Spaniards was totally destroyed as a military body.

ANN. 1811.

Soult advances to support Masséna.

The Governor of Badajos, Rafael Menacho, when summoned by Soult, replied that he meant to hold his trust in such sort that the siege should be written on the same page of history as the sieges of Gerona and Zaragoza. Unhappily he was slain on the ramparts: his successor, Imaz, was either a craven, a traitor, or both. On 11th March he capitulated, and just as Wellington had been censured for allowing the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, so now the Junta of Estremadura threw upon him the blame of Mendizabal's defeat. They complained that when Mendizabal asked for British cavalry,

Soult invests Badajos.

* *Despatches*, vii. 249, 264.

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Æt. 41. Wellington sent Portuguese, who ran away!* Wellington has, indeed, been severely and frequently blamed for not relieving Badajos; but the fact is that, until his reinforcements arrived from England, he could not spare the 13,000 men necessary for that object. These reinforcements arrived on the Tagus on 1st March. When Masséna broke up from Santarem on the 5th, word was sent to Governor Imaz that relief would be sent in a few days. The place was in no distress; the garrison had suffered no loss, except that of their former commander; the fire of the fortress was superior to that of the enemy, and Wellington was assured Imaz could hold out for a month. As soon as Masséna's retreat was found to be genuine, a column was detached to march to Badajos. It was recalled on the 9th in consequence of the enemy's movements rendering a general action at Pombal probable, and two days later Imaz hauled down his flag.

Badajos surrenders.

Soult's success, however, came too late to encourage Masséna to hold his ground. The starving and mutinous state of his troops, the dissensions and jealousy of their commanders, unfitted him to sustain the attack which the Allies would assuredly deliver as soon as the rivers should render it possible for them to assume the offensive. Having decided to retreat upon Coimbra by Pombal and Espinhal, he carried out his design in a manner so masterly as must always command the admiration of tacticians.

Masséna retreats.

Masséna himself lay at Santarem with the 2nd Corps. On his right at Pernes and Torres Novas was the 8th Corps, while Ney held the 6th Corps in reserve at Thomar, with

* *Lord Wellington to Hon. H. Wellesley.*

"3rd March, 1811.

"... I believe it is more necessary for me to justify myself for having trusted General Madden's brigade to the direction of General Mendizabal, than for having omitted to reinforce General Mendizabal with British cavalry. Till it can be shown that 10,000 Spanish infantry and 1,500 cavalry, with cannon, in a good position ... ought not to be expected to defend themselves against 4,000 French infantry and 1,800 cavalry ... this misfortune will not be attributed to me" (*Despatches*, vii. 325).

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Loison's Division holding Panhete on the Tagus to his left. ANN. 1811.
Having begun to send his baggage and sick to the rear, Masséna sent the 6th Corps and the cavalry to Leiria, threatening the left of the defences of the Allies, at the same time manœuvring with the 2nd and 8th Corps as if about to cross the Tagus at Panhete. But having burnt his boats and bridge apparatus on 5th March, he doubled back during the night, destroying the bridges on the Alviella, and retired the 2nd Corps upon Thomar, the 8th on Torres Novas. This movement was not discovered by Wellington till the morning of the 6th, but the advantage of the start was neutralised for Masséna by the growing insubordination of his Generals.* Masséna desired to concentrate upon Coimbra and offer battle; Ney, on the other hand, commanding the rear-guard, was in haste to get out of Portugal altogether. Drouet, Count d'Erlon, when instructed to support Ney, maintained that he was independent in his command, and would take orders neither from Masséna nor Ney. On 6th March, therefore, the 2nd Corps moved from Thomar to Espinhal, and the rest of the French army concentrated on Pombal. Wellington was perplexed by these manœuvres, but the 3rd and 5th Divisions having pushed forward to Leiria, ascertained that Masséna was preparing to give battle at Pombal. The French Marshal's design of retreating by Coimbra was altered in consequence of intelligence sent by Montbrun, who, having gone ahead with his light cavalry and a few guns to occupy Coimbra, mistook Trant's militiamen for the British

* *Marshal Masséna to Marshal Berthier.*

"Alfaiates, 31st March, 1811.

". . . I have done all that rested with me to keep the army out of Spain as long as possible . . . but I have been continually opposed, I make bold to say, by the commanders of the *corps d'armée*, who have roused such a spirit among the officers and soldiers, that it would be dangerous to retain our present positions any longer. . . . I have been the only one, I can assure you, who was willing to hold on in Portugal, and had I not been very resolute, we should not have remained there for fifteen days. In all my previous warfare I have never experienced so much opposition."

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Le Maréchal Ney.

PRINCE DE LA MOSKOWA

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retired once more, following Masséna through Miranda de Corvo, which he burnt, and covered the passage of the Ceira with his rear-guard. Next day, the 15th, Wellington struck a blow at Ney, who held the bridge of Foz d'Aronce and fought with more spirit than he had shown of late. The weather was very foggy, and the advanced guard did not come in sight of the enemy till 4 p.m., when Wellington ordered an immediate attack upon the rear-guard under Ney. The French left, suffering severely from the fire of horse artillery, fell into confusion; but their right remained firm, and stiffly withstood repeated attacks, while the main body crossed the bridge in safety. Then Ney, remaining at nightfall with a weak guard on the hither side, blew up the bridge, escaped along the river in the dark, and took up a position covering that of Masséna behind the Alva. ANN. 1811. Affair of Foz d'Aronce.

The Light Division bore the brunt of the fighting in these laborious days, and earned such high approval from the Commander-in-chief that he desired the commanding officers of the 43rd, 52nd, and 95th each to nominate a sergeant to receive an ensign's commission.

The horrors of this retreat exceeded anything that had taken place, even in these blood-boultered valleys. "Day after day," writes Napier in one of his finest passages, "Ney—the indomitable Ney—offered battle with the rear-guard, and a stream of fire ran along the wasted valleys of Portugal, from the Tagus to the Mondego, from the Mondego to the Coa." The French burnt every town and hamlet through which they passed, murdering the peasants and outraging the women; totally destroying the magnificent convent of Alcobaça,* the bishop's palace at Leiria, and many other fine

* "They had burnt what they could, and destroyed the remainder with an immense deal of trouble. The embalmed kings and queens were taken out of their tombs, and I saw them lying in as great preservation as the day they were interred. The fine tesselated pavement, from the entrance to the altar, was picked up, the facings to the stone pillars were destroyed nearly to the top, scaffolding having been erected for that purpose. . . . An orderly book found

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ÆT. 41.

buildings, with the mere object of vengeance on the country to which they had come as professed friends. The country people were dying in hundreds from sheer starvation or the fell famine fever; sixty-five died in one day at Leiria. Never, in modern civilised warfare, have the common feelings of humanity been more utterly quenched. The French used to press the peasants as guides, and shoot them at the end of a day's march, lest they should give information to the British. "Yet," testifies Colonel Tomkinson, "I never heard a complaint against us . . . they are the most patient people in the world." * Horrible sights shocked the eye in every mile of that *marche macabre*. Napier speaks of the honest wrath of his men when they came upon five hundred wretched asses which the French had abandoned when they could no longer feed them, and hamstrung because it was too much trouble to kill them. He speaks also with shuddering about acts of retaliation—how, for instance, he saw a Portuguese farmer encouraging his dog to worry wounded Frenchmen as they lay dying by the wayside.

Usefulness of Portuguese spies.

Wellington found the Portuguese, and especially the monks, very useful in supplying information about the enemy. During almost that whole period of the war a Portuguese spy lived undetected of Yrun, counting the French troops entering Spain by that main road, and forwarding valuable information to Wellington.†

Smartness of the British cavalry in reconnoitring.

General de Marbot mentions with admiration the system of reconnoitring practised by British cavalry in this campaign. Officers were sent out singly to conduct observations, mounted on thoroughbred horses and hovering just out of rifle-shot on the flanks of columns.

"In vain we sent our best mounted horsemen after them. When a British officer saw them approaching, he would set his

near the place showed that regular parties had been ordered for the purpose" (*Tomkinson*, 77).

* *Tomkinson*, 80. † *De Ros MS.*

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excellent charger at a gallop, easily leaping banks, hedges, and even brooks, and making off so swiftly that our men, unable to follow him, lost sight of him, till presently he would reappear a league further, on the top of some hillock where, spyglass in hand, he resumed his observations." ANN. 1811.

As a military arm, however, the British cavalry was inferior to the French, not only in numbers, but in efficiency. It was the English practice to manœuvre cavalry far more rapidly than the condition of horses on a campaign, sometimes fed entirely on green forage, rendered expedient. The men were never trained at home to disperse and re-form, and all their knowledge of outpost duty had to be picked up in the presence of the enemy.*

Soult returns to the South.

Notwithstanding the fall of Badajos, the corps destined for its relief had been detached on 11th March under Marshal Beresford, in order to protect Wellington's right flank. The defeat of Marshal Victor by General Graham at Barossa on 6th March had alarmed Soult about affairs in the South, and he returned to Seville, leaving Mortier to operate against Beresford, who had been instructed to blockade Badajos, and in all probability would have taken it as easily as he did Campo Mayor, had he been able to reach it before supplies were thrown in. But he was thwarted by the neglect of the Spanish authorities to comply with instructions to send the only bridge of boats on the Guadiana to Elvas: he could not pass that river till 4th April, by which time provisions and ammunition had been conveyed into Badajos. In Portugal, however, everything was going in favour of the allied forces—everything, at least, except the failure of concert with the Spanish armies, and the inveterate neglect of its soldiers in the field by the Portuguese Government. Grievously hampered by the last-mentioned impediment, Wellington wrote again and again to remonstrate and threaten.

* It is notorious that on the return of the troops to England after the peace no advantage was taken of the experience gained in the war. The cavalry continued to be drilled in the old routine of close column and change of position.

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ÆT. 41.

To Mr. Stuart.

"18th March.

"... There must be a radical change in the whole system of the Government in respect to the resources for carrying on the war, or I shall recommend his Majesty to withdraw his army. It is a favourite notion with some of the members of the (Portuguese) Government that Portuguese troops can do with very little or no food. Among other good qualities, they possess that of being patient under privations in an extraordinary degree. But men cannot perform the labours of soldiers without food. Three of General Pack's brigade died of famine yesterday on their march, and above one hundred and fifty have fallen out from weakness, many of whom must have died from the same cause . . . The mules of the artillery were unable to draw the guns from want of food, for any length of time: the baggage mules of the army are nearly all dead of famine. . . . I have this day told General Pack and Colonel Ashworth that if they cannot procure food for their troops with the army, they must go to Coimbra, or elsewhere where they can, as I cannot bear to see and hear of brave soldiers dying for want of common care. One consequence, therefore, of omitting to feed the troops will be to throw us again upon the defensive in this part of the country. Another consequence also, which I seriously apprehend, is that the British officers serving with the Portuguese troops will resign their situations." *

The Regency, and even more so the persons they employed, certainly brought these campaigns more than once to the verge of failure by their dilatoriness and inattention. Two-thirds of the Portuguese army was paid and partly clothed, the whole of it was armed and officered, by the British; the Regency had only to supply them with food and forage.† But in justice to the Portuguese it should be stated that the subsidies from England were often heavily in arrear; the Portuguese Treasury was in a constant state of depletion,

* *Despatches*, vii. 361.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 440, 477. Up to December, 1809, the Portuguese were in receipt of a subsidy of £600,000 a year for the pay of their troops; which was increased in that month to £980,000 a year.

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and the Regency was but an improvised Government, unpractised in administration and indifferently served by its officials. ANN. 1811.

To save them from perishing of famine, Wellington had to feed the Portuguese troops with rations from his own commissariat; and, although a ford across the Ceira lay open to him, he was condemned to two days of inaction after the successful affair at Foz d'Aronce, waiting the arrival of supplies. Little account of these causes of constantly recurring delay is taken by those who describe Wellington as lax in pursuit and naturally more disposed to defence than attack.

Masséna having retreated on the 15th to strong ground on the right bank of the Alva, the flooded state of the Ceira kept the Allies inactive on 16th March; but on the 17th, Wellington crossed on a raft bridge constructed in the night by the staff corps, and sent three divisions to turn the enemy's left by way of the difficult Sierra de Guiteria, while the 6th and Light Divisions threatened his front. This caused Masséna to concentrate on the Sierra de Moita; but when Wellington conformed by a similar concentration, the enemy, having destroyed more of his baggage and ammunition, fell rapidly back on Celorico and Guarda, where they lay on the 21st.

Hitherto nothing could have been more admirable or successful from a military point of view than the conduct of the retreat. Full advantage had been taken of the natural features of the ground; as often as Wellington with 40,000 men overtook Ney with 10,000, he could not attack with the head of his column, not knowing in what manner Ney was supported. He was obliged either to deploy his whole force or direct a turning movement, both of which operations allowed time for the main body of the French to be placed in safety, after which Ney lightly withdrew, and the whole labours of his adversary seemed thrown away.

Dissension among the French Generals.

Now, however, the dissension between the French Marshals had arrived at a climax. Masséna was unwilling

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Æt. 41.

to quit Portugal as a beaten General and without the Emperor's permission. He proposed to send his sick to Almeida, to march his army to Coria, in order to open communication with Soult (of whose return to Andalusia he was not aware) and with King Joseph. Thus reinforced, he intended to resume the invasion of Portugal, or at least to cover the garrisons in the captured towns of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, Almeida, and Olivença. Ney, on receiving his commander's orders to march south-east, moved his corps in a north-easterly direction, whereupon Masséna removed him from his command, which he gave to General Loison.* Masséna then determined to hold Guarda, a town strongly built on an isolated mountain in the Sierra da Estrella, whither he marched the 6th Corps with all speed, closely followed by the Allies. Regnier held Belmonte with the 2nd Corps, the 8th Corps and the cavalry remaining to the east of the Sierra.

Attack and capture of Guarda by the Allies.

Reinforcements having come up from Lisbon, Wellington increased the divisions of his army from six to seven, and on the morning of the 29th March attacked the heights of Guarda with five columns simultaneously from different points. The French abandoned the position without firing a shot, retiring in some confusion to the Coa, but covered by their rear-guard in excellent order. Regnier also retired from Belmonte in the same direction, his rear-guard fighting the Light Division. It is not clear why the enemy was not more vigorously pressed in retiring from Guarda and

* *Marshal Masséna to Marshal Berthier.*

"22nd March, 1811.

"I have been reduced to an extremity which I have strenuously endeavoured to avoid. The Marshal the Duc d'Elchingen (Ney) has arrived at the climax of disobedience. . . . I have given the command of the 6th corps to the Comte Loison, as the senior General of division. Sir, it is grievous for an old soldier who has commanded armies for so many years . . . to arrive at such a pass with one of his old comrades. The Duc d'Elchingen, since my arrival with this army, has not ceased to thwart me in my military operations. . . His character is well known: I shall say no more."

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Belmonte. It seems, at least, as if the prompt use of General Slade's cavalry, acting with the Light Division, might have cut off Regnier from joining the 6th Corps behind the Coa. ANN. 1811.

While the army of Portugal was in this rueful plight, their celebration of the birth of a son to their Emperor was not without the element of irony. One of Regnier's aides-de-camp warned one of Wellington's to be under no alarm if a cannonade was heard. Consequently, when a salute of 101 guns was fired on 2nd April in honour of the King of Rome, the British army understood and thoroughly enjoyed the joke.*

Combat of Sabugal.

The French having effected a concentration, took up a position on the right bank of the Coa, and here Masséna made a last attempt to keep his hold on Portuguese soil. His front and left flank were protected by the Coa, which flows round three sides of the heights on which his army was disposed in line of battle, the 6th Corps forming the right at Ravina, the left on a hill behind Sabugal, the 8th in support of both at Alfayates. Trant's Corps was sent round by Almeida to turn the enemy's right; the Light Division, with the cavalry on their right, were to cross by a ford opposite the French left; the 3rd Division, under General Picton, at another ford a mile above Sabugal, and the 5th Division, under General Dunlop, with the artillery at Sabugal bridge.

Effective and precise as this plan looks on paper, it broke down in execution. The morning of 3rd April was very wet and foggy, and Wellington could not regulate personally the execution of every detail in a position extending round half a wide circle. "These combinations," observed he, "do not answer unless one is on the spot to direct every trifling movement."† The Light Division moved forward prematurely: it was blind work in a heavy rainstorm. After driving in the enemy's pickets they suddenly found themselves engaged with the whole of the French 6th Corps, and were twice beaten back. They were in imminent danger of destruction

* *Despatches*, vii. 429. † *Ibid.*, vii. 415.

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ÆT. 41. when the 5th Division, having crossed the Coa at Sabugal bridge, came up, deployed, and poured such a withering fire on the close French columns as forced them to retire with the loss of a howitzer and many men. At the same moment the head of the 3rd Division of the Allies opened fire from a wood on the French right, while Slade's cavalry appeared on his left, and Regnier, fearing to be surrounded, retired rapidly upon Rodon, followed by the British cavalry, being joined in his retreat by the 6th Corps, which had not been engaged. The whole affair was over in an hour's time.

Wellington's official despatches were always singularly reserved, and his expressions cold—almost dry; but in private correspondence he sometimes permitted himself a rare note of exultation.

"We have given the French," he wrote to Captain Chapman, R.E., "a handsome dressing, and I think they will not again say we are not a manœuvring army. We may not manœuvre so beautifully as they do; but I do not desire better sport than to meet one of their columns *en masse* with our lines. The poor 2nd Corps received a terrible beating from the 43rd and 52nd on the 3rd." *

Masséna evacuates Portugal.

The second French invasion of Portugal had come to an inglorious end. Masséna had escaped the fate which might have overtaken him, but for the excessive caution imposed by the British Cabinet on his opponent, and the neglect by the Portuguese Government to fulfil their obligations,—he had escaped, indeed, but of the magnificent host of 86,000, which he had brought across the frontier in May, 1810, only about 45,000 ragged, half-starved, sullen warriors recrossed the Agueda in April, 1811. Except the garrison of Almeida he left not a single French soldier at liberty in Portugal, though the number of his prisoners was becoming a source of anxiety to Wellington.†

The loss of the Allies during their pursuit of Masséna,

* *Despatches*, vii. 421. † *Ibid.*, 105, 374, 388, 428, 530.

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lasting from 16th March to 7th April inclusive, was astonishingly small, considering that conflicts took place almost daily. The casualties among the British troops included 3 officers and 17 others killed, 11 officers and 136 others wounded, 1 officer and 4 men missing. The French were far more severely handled; at Sabugal alone Regnier left 300 dead on the field. This disproportion is attributable in great measure to the different field tactics of the two armies. The British infantry fought in line, being thereby exposed to much less offence from the fire of artillery and musketry. When it came to bayonet work, of course the weight of a column had its due advantage; but this was counterbalanced by the greater firing front afforded by the British formation. A single battalion deployed in line far overlapped the flanks of a close column of double companies, the usual French formation for attack. At Talavera, Busaco, and Sabugal, Wellington's confidence in the steadiness of British infantry in line had been amply vindicated, yet the French never ventured to put their soldiers to a similar test. Except when extended as skirmishers, they always handled them in column. ANN. 1811.

While Wellington was engaged in driving Masséna before him, Beresford, whom he had detached on 16th March with 22,000 men to operate on the Guadiana for the relief of Campo Mayor, had recaptured that place and Olivença. Wellington, leaving his forces to invest Almeida, arrived at Elvas on 20th April, and, having reconnoitred Badajos, directed Beresford to undertake the siege. Masséna, whose powers of recuperation under defeat were greater than Wellington seems to have realised, was busy at Salamanca repairing his disorders. The Emperor Napoleon had directed Marshal Bessières, who commanded the army of the North, to co-operate with the army of Portugal, and Masséna had repeatedly demanded his aid, an appeal to which Bessières for long turned a deaf ear. Wellington leaves his army to visit the Alemtejo.

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ÆT. 41.

Marshal Masséna to Marshal Bessières.

"Ciudad Rodrigo, 29th April, 1811.

". . . Your letters are past understanding. By that of the 20th you tell me you can afford me no help. In that of the 22nd you say that you will join me wherever I am on the 25th or 26th, and that the head of your column will reach Salamanca on the 26th. That which I have just received informs me that your cavalry and artillery are still, on the 27th, a day's march from Salamanca; you conclude that my movement is accomplished, and you express regret that you could not co-operate in it. You must allow, my dear Maréchal, that if the army of Portugal meets with a reverse, you will have to reproach yourself very severely."

At last, towards the very end of April, Bessières grudgingly detached 1,500 cavalry and 6 guns, upon which Masséna moved his headquarters to Ciudad Rodrigo, and advanced on 2nd May to the relief of Almeida.

Masséna's forward movement brought Wellington back at speed from the Alemtejo, greatly to the relief of his army; for, as one of his officers quaintly remarked, "we would rather see his long nose in the fight than a reinforcement of ten thousand men any day."* During his absence the Portuguese troops had suffered much from desertion, owing to the continued neglect of the Lisbon magistrates to forward supplies, and once more Wellington wrote very severely on the subject to Mr. Stuart.

"Has any magistrate been yet punished or even dismissed from his office for neglecting his duty? Has any alteration been made of any description in the old system of allowing every booby to do as he pleases, provided only that he cries Viva! . . . A fresh invasion would find us exactly where we were last year; and I do not think it would be safe to trust the King's army in this country, after such discouraging circumstances, and after the experience which the enemy have acquired of the country, its roads, etc., etc." †

* *Kincaid*, 74.

† *Despatches*, vii. 476.

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LE MARÉCHAL BESSIÈRES, DUC D'ISTRIE.

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Masséna resumes the offensive.

Deducting the troops acting with Beresford, Wellington could not oppose to Masséna's 40,000 men more than 33,000. He was especially weak in cavalry, having only 1,600 as compared with between 4,000 and 5,000 French. Nevertheless he determined to give battle, and on 2nd May, when the French army issued from Ciudad Rodrigo, falling back over the plain to the Dos Casas river, which he crossed, he placed the 1st, 3rd, and 7th Divisions on the right at Fuentes de Oñoro, supported by the Light Division, the 6th Division in the centre at the bridge of Alameda, and the 5th Division on the left at Fort Concepcion, the whole front extending to about five miles, and covering the force blockading Almeida, some six miles to the rear.

The conduct of the French armies towards the inhabitants of Portugal has been the subject of so much just and bitter opprobrium that it is no more than fair to record that the Allies, in spite of their commander's utmost efforts, were not always blameless. As a rule, property was respected, and supplies regularly paid for; but on this occasion, when the Light Division marched into the secluded village of Fuentes de Oñoro, they found that it had been pillaged and wrecked by their own comrades of the allied army. The soldiers were deeply indignant, for the Light Division had been kindly received there only a few days before. A subscription of 80,000 dollars was collected in the army as a sin-offering and handed to the alcalde.*

On 3rd May three columns of French appeared before the allied position. Their 8th and 2nd Corps threatened Wellington's left, therefore the Light Division fell back across the Dos Casas stream and moved to the left to strengthen the 6th Division, leaving five battalions to hold Fuentes de Oñoro. These were immediately attacked by General Loison, who drove the British out of the village upon the steep ground about the chapel. Wellington, perceiving that the detachment was in considerable peril, sent

* *Napier*, iii. 514.

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Æt. 42. the 24th, 71st, and 79th Regiments to its support, who charged vigorously, and expelled the French from the streets. At nightfall the French retired, leaving the British in possession of the place.

Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro.

Masséna arrived on the 4th, with a detachment under Marshal Bessières, and spent the day reconnoitring. During the night a change was made in the French position, menacing the right of the Allies towards Fuentes de Oñoro, and corresponding movements took place in Wellington's divisions. The weak point in his position was his right flank; the centre and left being well protected by the ravine of the Dos Casas; but, above the village, the character of the ground altered, the banks of the stream lost their precipitous character, and the flank of the Allies was open to be turned. To remedy this Wellington had recourse to a hazardous expedient. He extended the right by sending General Houstoun to occupy Poço Velho with the left wing of the 7th Division, refusing the right wing so as to connect with the Spanish Irregulars of Julian Sanchez on the Nava d'Aver. Then the Light Division, once more under command of the fiery Craufurd, and the cavalry, under Sir Stapleton Cotton, took ground to their right to support Houstoun, the 1st and 3rd Divisions moving in touch with them.

The 8th French Corps opened the ball by expelling two of Houstoun's battalions—the 85th British and 2nd Portuguese—from Poço Velho. General Fournier's advanced guard of cavalry moving out rapidly on the fine ground between Poço Velho and Nava d'Aver, forced Sanchez to abandon that important position, and turned Houstoun's right. The French squadrons swept on at the gallop, cutting off Captain Norman Ramsay's battery of Horse Artillery, but were checked by the charge of Cotton's dragoons. This gave Ramsay a chance. Fighting his way valiantly through the *melée*, he brought off all his guns—an exploit famous for ever in the annals of the Royal Artillery.*

* Captain Ramsay was killed at Waterloo.

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ANN. 1811.

Montbrun, however, bringing up the main body of cavalry, swept down on the 7th and Light Divisions: the latter received them in squares—the former in line, partly protected by a stone wall. Affairs were exceedingly critical: Wellington's right was not only turned but broken; he saw that he must give up the idea of covering his communication with the Coa by way of Sabugal. Accordingly, he ordered the 1st, 3rd, and Light Divisions to fall back and occupy a ridge connecting the streams of Dos Casas and Turones, while the 7th Division crossed the last-named stream and formed the right of the new position near Freneda. A change of front in presence of 5,000 excellent cavalry supported by fifteen guns, is a more serious matter than a birthday parade; "there was not," observes Napier, "during the war a more dangerous hour for England." But the movement was executed with admirable steadiness, the French cavalry hovering round, but not venturing to charge, the squares, although they captured Colonel Hill's detachment of the Guards. The new position was secured, nearly at right angles to the old one, and the French cavalry being powerless without the support of infantry, the combat on the right resolved itself into an artillery duel.

The allied flank turned and broken.

While affairs were thus critical on the right of the line, the village of Fuentes de Oñoro had been vigorously attacked by the whole of the 6th Corps. Colonel Cameron, commanding the 1st Brigade, was mortally wounded, and the lower part of the village was carried. The 24th, 71st, and 79th Regiments, however, held the higher streets till reinforcements came up, and in the evening the French desisted from the attack, leaving the Allies in possession of the upper part of the village. The battle was entirely confined to the ground between Fuentes de Oñoro and Nava d'Aver; the divisions on the allied left never having been engaged. The result, though indecisive, must be accounted extremely fortunate for the Allies. Their position was a very faulty one, dangerously extended, and had Montbrun's cavalry, after

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Æt. 42. the British change of front, pushed on by Sabugal bridge, they would have cut Wellington's communications, and might have destroyed his magazines at Guarda and Celorico. Again, had Masséna made full use of his advantages, had he occupied with artillery the wooded ridge commanding Fuentes de Oñoro from the south, or even had Drouet supported more promptly the 6th Corps in its attack on the village; had the attack by the 6th Corps been made earlier, while the British right was retiring, and before supports could be sent to Colonel Cameron; lastly, had Masséna not had to contend with the disaffection and actual insubordination of Bessières, Junot, Regnier, and even Loison, and the refusal of the Imperial Guard to receive orders direct from him, it must have gone very hard with the Allies, who, if forced to retreat with the garrison of Almeida in their rear, must have fought a difficult way to the Coa at Castel Bom. Wellington's expressions in official despatches were always extremely guarded, knowing as he did how sensitive the British public were to alarm or discouragement; but in his private letters he admitted that his army had been in considerable jeopardy.

Viscount Wellington to the Right Hon. W. Wellesley Pole.

"Quinta de S. Joäs, 2nd July, 1811.

". . . Lord Liverpool was quite right not to move thanks for the battle of Fuentes, though it was the most difficult I was ever concerned in, and against the greatest odds. We had very nearly three to one against us engaged; above four to one of cavalry; and, moreover, our cavalry had not a gallop in them, while some of that of the enemy was fresh, and in excellent order. If Bony had been there we should have been beaten." *

On the evening of the 5th the French pickets and sentries occupied the right bank of the Dos Casas stream; those of the Light Division the left. The customary courtesies were exchanged between them.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 176.

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"I am glad to see you here," called out the French field-officer, as he posted his pickets, to a captain of the 52nd on the other bank. "We shall now understand each other. When you want water, and our sentries challenge, call out 'aqua,' and you shall have it. Have the goodness to give your boys (*vos enfants*) similar orders." * ANN. 1811.

After dusk, however, a French soldier, a sergeant, was taken within the British lines, and brought as a prisoner before Captain Love of the 52nd. He explained that he had come into the village to bid adieu to his Spanish sweetheart.

"C'est l'amour qui m'a fait votre prisonnier, mon capitaine."

"Eh bien," was Captain Love's reply, "pour cette fois-ci nous ne serons pas trop exigeants. Retournez chez votre capitaine, et dites-lui que si l'amour vous a joué un mauvais tour, l'amour vous a dédommagé. Je m'appelle Love; vous ne m'oublierez de sitôt." *

Throughout the night of the 5th working parties had been busy strengthening the position of the Allies with entrenchments, in preparation for the expected renewal of the attack next morning, but the 6th and 7th were passed in inaction by the French. On the morning of the 8th May, Lord Aylmer, Deputy Adjutant-General, came in to Lord Wellington's room when he was shaving, to tell him "the French had all moved off in the night, and the last of the cavalry were mounting to be gone." "Ay," said Wellington, stopping his operations for a minute, "gone, are they? I thought they meant to be off. Very well;" and set to work again with his razor.† So little emotion did he allow himself to show at what was, in truth, the turning-point of the campaign. Retreat of the French.

Indeed, the Allies came remarkably well out of this affair. Wellington succeeded in covering the blockade of Almeida, and the movement of the French reported to him on the morning of the 8th proved to be a regular retreat. To

* From the 52nd *Record*.

† *Larpent*, i. 108.

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Æt. 42. account for it there is abundant evidence in the correspondence of Napoleon with his commanders in Spain.

Napoleon rebukes his Marshals.

Marshal Marmont to Marshal Berthier.

"Salamanca, 14th May, 1811.

". . . It is evident to me about the campaign in Portugal, that the present situation is the result of the unwillingness of the Prince of Essling (Masséna) to give battle either during the retreat or during his operations upon Almeida, although he was offered battle several times, which he would certainly have won, and so altered the whole fortune of the campaign."

Marshal Berthier to Marshal Bessières.

"Rambouillet, 19th May, 1811.

"The Emperor is dissatisfied at your not having furnished the Prince of Essling (Masséna) the necessary assistance. You ought to have [here follow an infinite number of criticisms on the Marshal's movements]. The Emperor, M. le Maréchal, finds that you have been useless to the army of Portugal. . . . What is the use of all this reluctance to unite and employ your forces in presence of the English, our implacable foes? What is the use of keeping Palencia, Lerma, and all these other posts, which scatter your army? . . . The Emperor, M. le Maréchal, hopes that you will retrieve the enormous blunder which you have committed. You have under your command about 50,000 men; what a splendid opportunity of concentrating them immediately to support the Prince of Essling and crush the English!"

Marshal Bessières to Marshal Berthier.

"Valladolid, 6th June, 1811.

". . . Whatever may be the reports made to the Emperor about the different parts of Spain, it is not the less positive that I tell you the truth, and that things are everywhere the same. . . . Monseigneur, talk of Spain! people are deluding the Emperor. . . . Everybody perceives the vicious system of our operations. Everybody agrees that we are too much scattered. We occupy too much country; we use up our means without profit or

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necessity; we indulge in dreams. . . . If I deceive myself in my calculations and appear to be a craven, you must remember that I am in the habit of calculating chances . . . the consequence of all this may prove irreparable if the present system is not changed." ANN. 1811.

Stung by the Emperor's reproaches, Bessières vented his irritation upon the unfortunate inhabitants of the country. On 11th June he issued an inhumane *arrêté*, of which the tenor may be gathered from the following extracts:—

"1. There shall be made out lists of all persons who have quitted their dwellings.

"2. Every such person shall return within a month, and, if they do not, they shall be reputed to have joined the insurgents —their property shall be confiscated, and their tenants or debtors shall pay the amount of their respective debts into the hands of the Government.

"3. The fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children and nephews of any such person shall be held responsible in property and person for any act of violence by such person committed.

"4. If any inhabitant be carried off from his residence, all the relatives, in the aforesaid degrees, of any known insurgent shall be arrested forthwith as hostages; and if any inhabitant so carried off is put to death by the insurgents, these hostages shall be shot to death on the spot without any form of trial. . . .

"The parson of every parish, the alcalde, the magistrates, and the clergy in general are to be held responsible for the payment of all contributions and for the supply of the French army with equipments, goods, merchandise, and means of transport. Any village which shall not immediately fulfil any order it shall have received shall be subjected to military execution."

Masséna's position had become intolerable; nominal command over officers who claimed to be independent, and over troops which would take no orders except through these officers, had brought about a state of matters under which he could not operate against a General whose ability he had Retreat of the French.

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Æt. 42. learnt to respect. Having sent orders to General Brennier, Governor of Almeida, to blow up his fortifications and make his escape as best he could, Masséna put his army in motion on the 8th May, and retired across the Agueda on the 10th. The Allies were ordered into cantonments in the neighbourhood of Fuentes de Oñoro, the Light Division leading the way off the battlefield with their bands playing the "British Grenadiers."* The loss of the Allies in the fighting on 3rd and 5th May was 11 officers killed, 81 wounded, and 7 prisoners; 224 sergeants and men killed, 1,153 wounded, and 310 prisoners.† That of the French was 308 killed, 2,147 wounded, and 210 prisoners.

Masséna is superseded.

The qualities of a commander are never fully tested till he is obliged to conduct a retreat. The manner in which Masséna led his army from Santarem to the frontier, weakened as it was by disease and dispirited by ill success and dissension, through a bitterly hostile population and before an eager and watchful enemy, have earned for him the highest admiration; but Masséna served a master who never pardoned want of success. The anger of the Emperor, which had already fallen upon Soult, was now poured on *l'enfant chéri de la victoire;* no remembrance of past service tempered the harshness of rebuke. The veteran was removed from his command in disgrace, and to Marshal Marmont, Duc de Raguse, was committed the long-deferred object of driving the English into the sea.

Escape of the garrison of Almeida.

Nothing now seemed to interfere with the speedy surrender of Almeida, but as Wellington afterwards wrote to Mr. Pole—

"I begin to be of opinion with you that there is nothing so stupid as a gallant officer. They (the blockading force) had about 13,000 men to watch 1,400; and in the night of the 10th, to the infinite surprise of the enemy, they allowed the garrison to slip through their fingers and to escape, after blowing up some of the

* *Life and Opinions*, i. 172. † *Despatches*, vii. 520.

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works of the place! There they were—sleeping in their spurs, even; but the French got off." * ANN. 1811.

The garrison escaped by the bridge of Barba del Puerco, which Wellington had sent orders should be occupied by the 4th Regiment under Colonel Bevan. Brennier, however, found the bridge unguarded, and the result was what Wellington described as "the most disgraceful military event that has yet happened to us." † In this matter the vexation of the Commander of the Forces seems to have overborne his sense of fairness. He would allow no inquiry into Colonel Bevan's conduct, nor listen to his explanation. It is said that the order for the 4th Regiment to occupy Barba del Puerco was sent to Sir William Erskine, who received it at 2 p.m., but did not send it on to Bevan till midnight. Bevan had been ordered to watch the passes over the Agueda; hearing the firing at the Barba, he made his battalion fall in at once to march to that point, and at that moment received the belated order. Erskine, either to escape the blame that was his due, or because he was not at all times responsible for his actions, reported that the 4th Regiment had lost its way; and gallant Bevan, unable to endure the unmerited disgrace, shot himself at Portabayre. ‡

While these things were passing in Beira, Beresford had begun, on 4th May, the first serious siege of the campaign, although almost destitute of the material for such an undertaking, and having no trained sappers. But the return of

Beresford lays siege to Badajos.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 123.

† *Despatches*, vii. 533.

‡ *Tomkinson.* General Brennier had a private motive for his anxiety not to fall into Wellington's hands. Made prisoner at Vimeiro, after some months' residence in London on parole, his exchange was effected. When leaving London he told Sir Arthur Wellesley (then in England) that he had got into debt and asked for a loan in order to pay his bills. Wellesley at once gave him a cheque for £500, which Brennier assured him would be repaid directly he reached Paris. Brennier reached Paris safe enough, but to the end of his life the Duke of Wellington never received repayment of his loan.

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Æt. 42.

Battle of Albuera.

Soult from the south, with 15,000 infantry, 3,000 cavalry, and 40 guns, obliged him to raise the siege on the 12th, and take up a position at Albuera, where he formed a junction with the Spanish corps of Blake and Ballasteros. On the 16th was fought the battle of Albuera, one of the most terrible of the whole war, which cost the Allies not less than 7,000 killed and wounded, and their opponents an even larger number.* Both armies remained on the field, but on the 18th Soult retired to Solano,† and Beresford detached General Hamilton to resume operations against Badajos. It was Wellington's opinion that if he had not been delayed by the escape of Brennier from Almeida, and had arrived in time for the battle of Albuera, he would have made a great thing of it. Beresford was a brave and good soldier, but he had not the iron nerve to enable him to resist despondency under the frightful slaughter of his troops.

* "That which was most conspicuous in the battle of Albuera was the want of discipline of the Spaniards. These troops behaved with the utmost gallantry, but it was hopeless to think of moving them. In the morning the enemy gained an eminence which commanded the whole extent of the line of the Allies, which either was occupied, or was intended to be occupied by Spanish troops. The natural operation would have been to re-occupy this ground by means of Spanish troops; but that was impossible. The British troops were consequently moved there; and all the loss sustained by those troops was incurred in regaining a height which ought never for a moment to have been in possession of the enemy" (Lord Wellington's Memorandum, *Despatches*, viii. 487).

"The battle of Albuera was a strange concern. They were never determined to fight it; they did not occupy the ground as they ought; they were ready to run away at every moment from the time it commenced till the French retired; and, if it had not been for me, who am now suffering from the loss and disorganisation caused by that battle, they would have written a whining report upon it, which would have driven the people in England mad. However, I prevented that" (*Lord Wellington to Right Hon. W. W. Pole, Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 176).

† Soult claimed Albuera as *une victoire signalée* for the French, but the official account of the action by M. Belmas shows that the Marshal never succeeded in persuading the French War Department to share his illusion.

"The two armies," says he, "remained in presence of each other the next day, the 17th; but in the night, Marshal Soult, who could no longer hope to face the Allies, made his retreat. . . . He remained in observation at Llerena to reorganise his army, which was greatly demoralised by the losses it had suffered" (*Belmas*, i. 184).

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Fortune was certainly smiling on the cause of the Allies at this time. Not only had Wellington and Beresford each been saved by the errors of their opponents from the penalty for faulty tactics, but political forces were telling adversely upon the French. King Joseph's conduct had not been in accord with Napoleon's conception of a puppet King. His Spanish ministers had been frequently at issue with the French Generals; Joseph represented that he had been made a King against his desire, and was unable to raise money to keep up what he conceived to be proper royal state; Napoleon retorted by scolding him roundly for personal extravagance. At last, weary of the parade of royalty with none of the power or dignity, Joseph, who certainly possessed many amiable, and even statesmanlike, qualities, made formal renunciation of his crown, and, leaving Madrid with an escort of 5,000 men, went to Paris with the intention of retiring into private life.

ANN. 1811.

King Joseph leaves Madrid and renounces his crown.

Marmont, on assuming the command vacated by Masséna, went into cantonments at Salamanca, which enabled Wellington to detach his 3rd and 7th Divisions to strengthen Beresford on the Guadiana. Leaving Sir Brent Spencer at Sabugal with 18,000 men, and instructions to act only on the defensive against Marmont, he arrived at Elvas on 19th May, and caused Beresford to follow the French cautiously in their retreat. Soult, falling back about four marches in a south-easterly direction, established himself at Llerena, in the Sierra Morena, where he awaited Drouet with reinforcements from the army of Portugal.

Marmont takes command of the army of Portugal.

The question presented itself whether Soult should be attacked before he was reinforced, or whether Badajos might not be carried before he was strong enough to return to its relief. Wellington's decision has been pronounced faulty, and the criticism has been justified by his failure to carry his design into effect. No doubt he was right, knowing the qualities of his Spanish contingent, to refrain from following Soult; he could not leave such strong places as Badajos and

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ÆT. 42.

Ciudad Rodrigo on his rear; he had not enough troops to blockade them, and at the same time to advance into Spain; but to attempt a regular siege with the appliances at his disposal, and without a corps of trained engineers, was to ensure discomfiture, except at enormous sacrifice of life. The discomfiture came early; the price of success—for Wellington's armies always succeeded in the end—had to be paid later. The blame for all this has, as usual among military writers, been thrown on the British Government, because they had not furnished siege material; but, in fact, Wellington had made no demand for such. He relied on what he could get from Elvas, and it is best to admit frankly that this was one of the rare occasions on which he exhibited want of foresight.* But the weakest point in Wellington's scheme for the capture of Badajos was that of time. Unless he could take it before Soult received reinforcements, he knew he must be disturbed. The place was invested on 25th May, and fire was opened on 2nd June from an improvised train of fifty-two pieces, made up of ancient ordnance, some of it dating from the sixteenth century, brass guns with shot that did not fit the bore, and Portuguese ship cannon brought from the coast. These were served, however, with as much diligence and spirit as if they had been the latest masterpieces of military science. The outwork of San Christoval, commanding the castle, was the most important of the defences, and this was pronounced ready for storm on the 6th. A company of grenadiers were told off as an escalading party under Major Mackintosh of the 85th, and at midnight these were led by a forlorn hope under Ensign Dyas of the 51st, who volunteered for the service. They reached the foot of the breach unperceived, but the besiegers having neglected or being unable to crown the glacis,† the

Re-investment of Badajos.

* He himself confessed that he was mistaken in estimating the quality of the guns and appliances to be supplied from the garrison of Elvas (*Despatches*, viii. 13).

† The upper slope of the outer parapet on the side of the ditch furthest from the fortress.

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defenders had been able to work without being exposed to fire, and had cleared away all the rubbish; the wall was seven feet high, the ladders too short; the British were repulsed with the loss of a hundred men. ANN. 1811.

The bombardment was resumed, with such effect as might be expected from 24-pound shot thrown by guns of a larger calibre;* a second attempt at escalade, the forlorn hope being again led by the brave Dyas, fared even worse than the first, and was withdrawn after losing 140 men; their commander, Major M'Geehy, being among the killed, as well as two out of the eleven engineer officers present with the army.

Next morning Wellington received information that Marmont was on the move for Estremadura, to co-operate with Soult. Anxious, accordingly, for the security of his magazines, he raised the siege of Badajos on 12th June, and took measures for the defence of Elvas. The loss of the Allies during the siege was 34 officers and 451 men killed, wounded, and missing. Marmont was in communication with Soult at Merida on 15th June, their united forces amounting to 60,000 men, of which 7,000 were cavalry. General Hill, who had been watching Soult at Llerena, fell back on Albuera, where the allied army was concentrated on the 24th, numbering 28,320 British and 20,126 Portuguese, exclusive of artillery.† An attempt was made to induce General Blake to co-operate with the Allies; but he, heartily disliking the English, preferred to make an independent attempt upon Seville, and crossed the Guadiana on 22nd June. Instead of moving at once on his objective, where he had a good chance of success, he made an unsuccessful attempt upon Niebla on the 30th, thus affording Soult time to move to the relief of Seville. When Soult did draw near, Blake embarked his army at the mouth of the Guadiana, and, making sail for the coast of Murcia, removed himself from the sphere of active operations. The siege again raised.

For nearly three weeks the forces of Wellington and

* *Despatches*, viii. 18. † *Ibid.*, viii. 490.

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Æt. 42. Marmont lay opposite one another; Wellington, ready to give battle if attacked, yet contented himself with a position covering Campo Mayor and Elvas, while the enemy, though reconnoitring occasionally, remained inactive, till, on 14th July, Marmont retired into cantonments north of the Tagus, Drouet moved the 5th Corps to Zafra, and Soult withdrew, as above mentioned, to Andalusia. Brialmont observes that "the situation of Wellington had seldom been more critical" than during this period; but certainly Wellington himself was under no apprehensions at the time. On 18th July he wrote to Lord Liverpool—

"With the fine and well-equipped army which we have, and with our cavalry in such good order as it is, and with the prospect of the renewal of hostilities in the north of Europe, I am most anxious not to allow this moment of the enemy's comparative weakness to pass by without making an effort to improve the situation of the Allies in the Peninsula." *

No doubt the French might have attacked the Allies in their position on the Caya with advantage, for they had the superiority in numbers, especially in cavalry, for which the ground was well suited. But Wellington had caused British soldiers to earn that quality in which they had been wholly deficient at the beginning of the war—namely, prestige—and Soult might well pause before leading against them troops which had so lately tasted British steel and lead at Busaco, Fuentes de Oñoro, Albuera, and a hundred minor conflicts. There was another reason nearly as strong: Marmont could not brook taking orders from Soult, and once again Wellington derived favour from the inconvenience arising from two Marshals in one camp—rival suns in the same hemisphere. Besides, the French Government in Spain was dislocated by King Joseph's abdication and his abandonment, for the second time, of his capital. This was an instance of Wellington's luck, of which some people assert he had more than his due share. On the other hand, let it be remembered

The French retire from Estremadura.

* *Despatches*, viii. 111.

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that the plans he had provided for timely action by the Spanish Generals were not carried out. Blake ought to have forced Soult to attend to the safety of Seville, instead of which he fled to his ships at Ayamonte, leaving Ballesteros unsupported in the Condado—a golden opportunity was allowed to slip, and nothing took place, except such isolated actions as the surprise of Rovira by Figueras, and the defence of Taragona which kept Suchet occupied. With ordinary luck, the British commander might have received more substantial support from the nation he was labouring to liberate. The only commander he could rely on was Julian Sanchez, the guerilla chief, who well maintained the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo till his arrival on the Coa. ANN. 1811.

Estremadura having been cleared of the enemy, Wellington had to decide on a fresh course of action. To make another attempt on Badajos in the dog days was out of the question, the climate of that neighbourhood being notoriously unhealthy; to carry the war into Andalusia would be to sacrifice his admirable base and communications. Like one with his back to the wall, he could meet successive assailants with confidence, well knowing that, while he drew his own supplies securely from Lisbon, no prolonged concentration of his opponent's forces could be maintained owing to the difficulties of subsistence. Desiring, however, to deceive the enemy into believing that he intended a movement towards the south, Wellington caused the siege-train and artillery recently landed from England to be re-embarked at Lisbon, and the transports carrying them to sail for the south in open day as if making for Cadiz and Gibraltar. Then, under cover of night, the material was transferred to smaller vessels which made all speed to the Douro, while the rest of the fleet continued their deceptive course. By this ruse the siege equipment was landed at Lamego and dragged across the mountains to Celorico, while the allied army, breaking up from the Caya on 21st July, crossed the Tagus at Villa Velha, arrived on the Coa on 8th August, and at once took up the blockade of

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ÆT. 42.

Ciudad Rodrigo. Unluckily, he had been greatly misinformed as to the strength of the army of the North under Marshal Bessières; it amounted to 60,000 men with 6,000 cavalry, against which Wellington could only show 40,000, after detaching General Hill to keep Marmont in check on the Tagus; moreover, supplies had recently been thrown into Ciudad Rodrigo. Under these circumstances it was deemed wiser not to bring forward the siege equipment, and to limit operations to blockading the fortress.

The Allies blockade Ciudad Rodrigo.

Reinforcements arrive from France.

During the comparative inaction which always prevailed on both sides in the dog days, 40,000 reinforcements arrived in the north of Spain from France, and intercepted letters indicated the intention of Napoleon to proceed to the Peninsula in person. Whether this was his genuine intention is doubtful, but the prospect caused Wellington to repair and strengthen the lines of Torres Vedras, in view of a possible retreat. On the other hand, the presence of the Allied army on the Coa had the effect which Wellington contemplated and desired. It caused Marmont to recall Dorsenne from Galicia at a critical moment for the safety of that province, with its important harbours of Coruña and Vigo; but it also exposed the Allies to a concentrated attack from far more numerous forces than had been calculated on —and concentration was most feasible immediately after harvest, when supplies were most abundant. Marmont, reinforced by Dorsenne's corps to the number of 60,000, advanced to the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo, which Wellington blockaded with 40,000.

Marmont advances to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo.

On the approach of the enemy on 21st September, the Allies were concentrated on a position on the left bank of the Agueda; Wellington's object was, not to fight a battle, but to force the enemy to show his real strength, inasmuch as the country people, believing and reporting that the French were far inferior in strength to the Allies, would have formed an unfavourable opinion of the British commander had he allowed them to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo.

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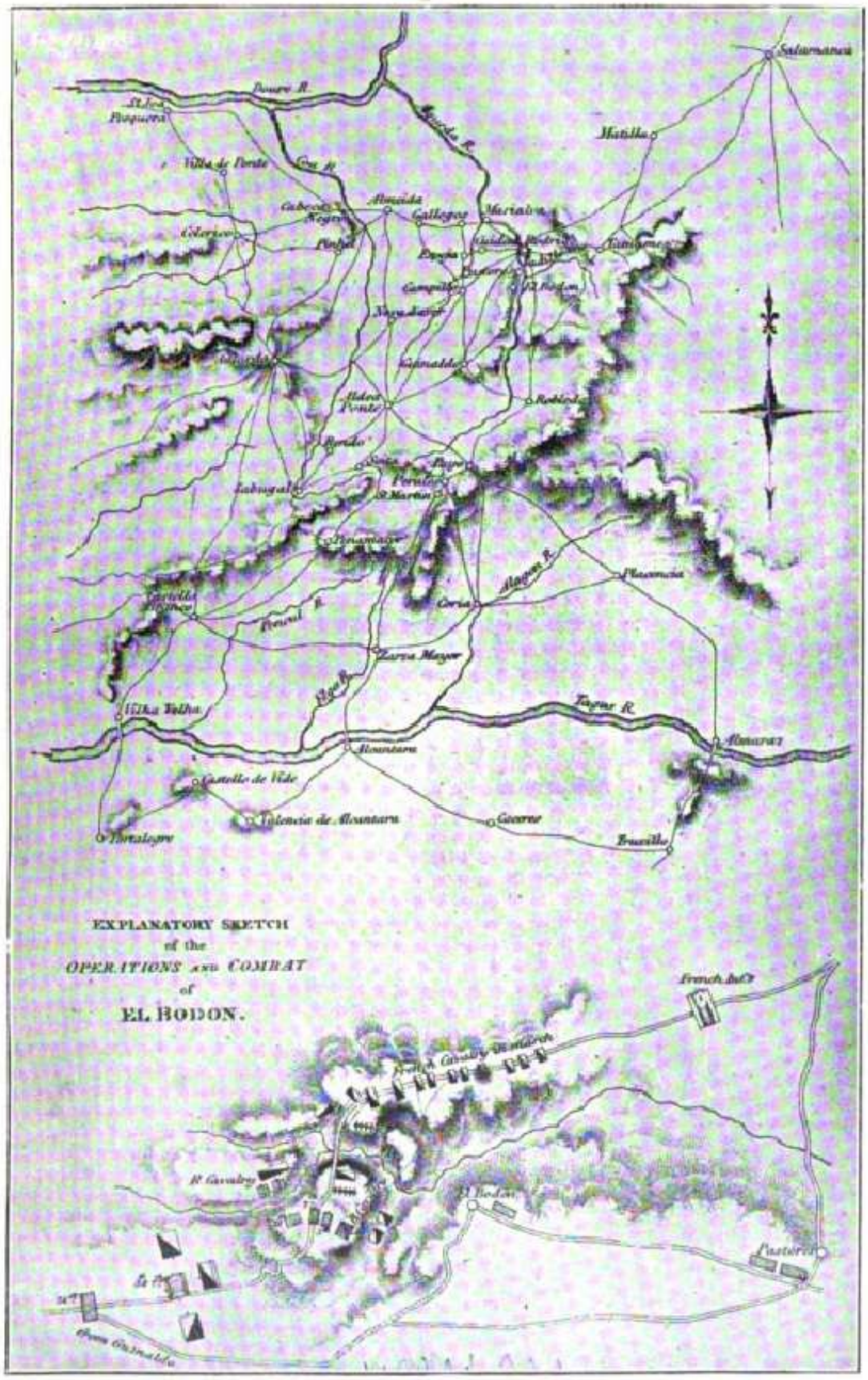

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On the 23rd September the enemy's columns were seen approaching from Tamames, on the north-east of Ciudad Rodrigo. A strong detachment reconnoitred the position of the Allies and communicated with the fortress. Wellington's position was dangerously extended. The 3rd Division, with three squadrons of the 1st Hussars and 11th Light Dragoons, lay on the heights above the village of El Bodon, with its advanced guard at Pastores, about three miles from Ciudad Rodrigo. On their right, and beyond the Agueda, were the Light Division, with some cavalry and six guns; on their left, at Espeja, was the 6th Division, under General Graham,* and Anson's brigade and cavalry, with advanced posts at Marialva and Carpio, about eight miles through Rodrigo. Beyond Graham, Don Julian Sanchez, the bold and able guerilla chief, lined the river-banks with his *partidas*, horse and foot. Sir Stapleton Cotton's cavalry division was stationed between the 3rd and 6th Divisions, while the 4th Division held an entrenched position at Guinaldo behind the first line. The 7th Division was in reserve at Alamedilla, the 1st at Nava d'Aver, and the 5th in observation of General Foy at the Pass of Perales, several miles in rear of Guinaldo.

ANN. 1811.

Action of El Bodon.

On the 24th September Marmont introduced a convoy into Ciudad Rodrigo, protected by 6,000 cavalry and four divisions of infantry. On the 25th, at sunrise, the cavalry of the Imperial Guard drove in the outposts of the Light Division, and at the same time Montbrun brought thirty or forty squadrons of cavalry with his guns, supported by fourteen battalions of infantry, across the Agueda and marched upon Guinaldo, actually turning the position occupied by the allied centre and showing at the very outset the exceeding weakness of Wellington's disposition. Fortunately, the Allies were posted so high above El Bodon that Marmont could not, or at least did not, make out their real strength: he hesitated to risk his infantry in assaulting the height, and employed cavalry and artillery only. Strange to say, it was

* Afterwards Lord Lynedoch.

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not the British infantry that repelled the attack of these fine horsemen, but the three squadrons of the 1st Hussars and 11th Light Dragoons (the "Cherubims"), which charged them repeatedly as often as they touched the brow of the hill. The struggle went on for an hour: the ground favoured the British, but it was too much extended for their numbers, and at last Montbrun got his artillery forward and the cavalry captured four guns, cutting down the Portuguese gunners at their posts. Then was to be seen a strange, almost unprecedented spectacle. The 2nd battalion 5th Regiment of the Line under Major Ridge,* charged the French cavalry with the bayonet and retook the guns; the 77th British and 21st Portuguese at the same time driving back the cavalry on the left.

The position, however, had become too warm to be longer held. Wellington ordered Picton, who had three regiments in the village below the hill, to retire and unite with Colville's brigade in the plain between El Bodon and Guinaldo. Forming battalion squares (the 5th and 77th being weak formed a single square), this magnificent infantry retired in that formation, halting from time to time to repel charges of the French cavalry,† till they joined the rest of the 3rd Division, also in squares, and continued the retreat upon the entrenchments of Fuente Guinaldo, six miles in rear of El Bodon. It was a trying ordeal for the steadiness of our troops, closely followed by the enemy's cavalry, and exposed from time to time to the fire of horse artillery, but they bore it splendidly.

General retreat of the Allies.

Wellington, perceiving that the position could not be held in the presence of forces stronger than his own by one-third, now ordered a general retreat. The Light Division was most

* Now the Northumberland Fusiliers. Major Ridge was killed in the assault on Badajos not long after.

† In a general order of unusual length and detail, Wellington made acknowledgment of the behaviour of these battalions as "a memorable example of what can be effected by steadiness, discipline and confidence" (*Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 223).

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critically exposed on the further bank of the Agueda, and General Craufurd, always disinclined to retire before an enemy, was very dilatory in obeying the order. The 6th Division being directed to combine with the 1st at Nava d'Aver, left a wide interval between the two wings of the army, and on the morning of the 26th, the whole of Marmont's force, 60,000 strong with 100 cannon, was arrayed in line of battle before the entrenchments of Fuente Guinaldo, where Wellington had only 15,000 men. An attack appeared imminent, and could have had but one result—fatal to the Allies; yet Marmont wasted his opportunity in a series of parade movements in the plain, ignorant of the real weakness of his enemy. ANN. 1811.

The Light Division marched in under their headstrong commander at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and during the night Wellington resumed his retreat, concentrating his scattered divisions on a new position nine miles in rear of Guinaldo, between Aldea Velha on the right and Bismula on the left, covering all the roads to the fords and bridges across the Coa. A partial engagement took place in the afternoon between the 4th Division and a French Division with fourteen squadrons of cavalry, resulting in the capture by the enemy of the village Aldea da Ponte. On the night of the 27th the Allies resumed their retreat, halting once more on strong ground extending from Rendo on the Coa, by Soita to the mountains on their right. Here an attack might have been received with confidence, but Marmont, failing to obtain provisions for his men, retired the same day, and his army separated, he himself resuming his position near Talavera, and Dorsenne marching off to Salamanca. The French withdraw.

Although it is easy to point out the weakness of Wellington's dispositions to receive Marmont at Ciudad Rodrigo, the ability with which he remedied them can scarcely be questioned. It was Craufurd's delay in returning across the Agueda which chiefly imperilled the whole army. Had Wellington listened to some of his Generals he would have

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ÆT. 42. abandoned the Light Division to the fate incurred by its commander's disregard of orders; but to that he would not consent. The only alternative was a piece of bravado, which completely imposed on the French Marshal. Once free to leave Guinaldo, and there was an end to the danger of awaiting in an extended position attack by an enemy of overpowering strength. Wellington then concentrated his divisions in a masterly manner, and could choose his own positions in a country which he knew as well as any English county. On the whole, however, it must be admitted that, seeing that the centre of the Allies was broken on the 25th, as the Scots say they owed "mair to luck than gude guidance" in the neglect of their adversary to press such an advantage.

After Marmont's retreat, Wellington resumed the strategy whereby he desired to keep a large body of the enemy occupied on the frontier, thus encouraging the Spaniards to undertake operations elsewhere. The blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo was renewed, the main body of the army going into cantonments on the Coa with headquarters at Freneda. It would have been impossible to conduct active operations at this period, owing to the prevalence of fever among the British troops, especially those who had served in the ill-fated Walcheren expedition.

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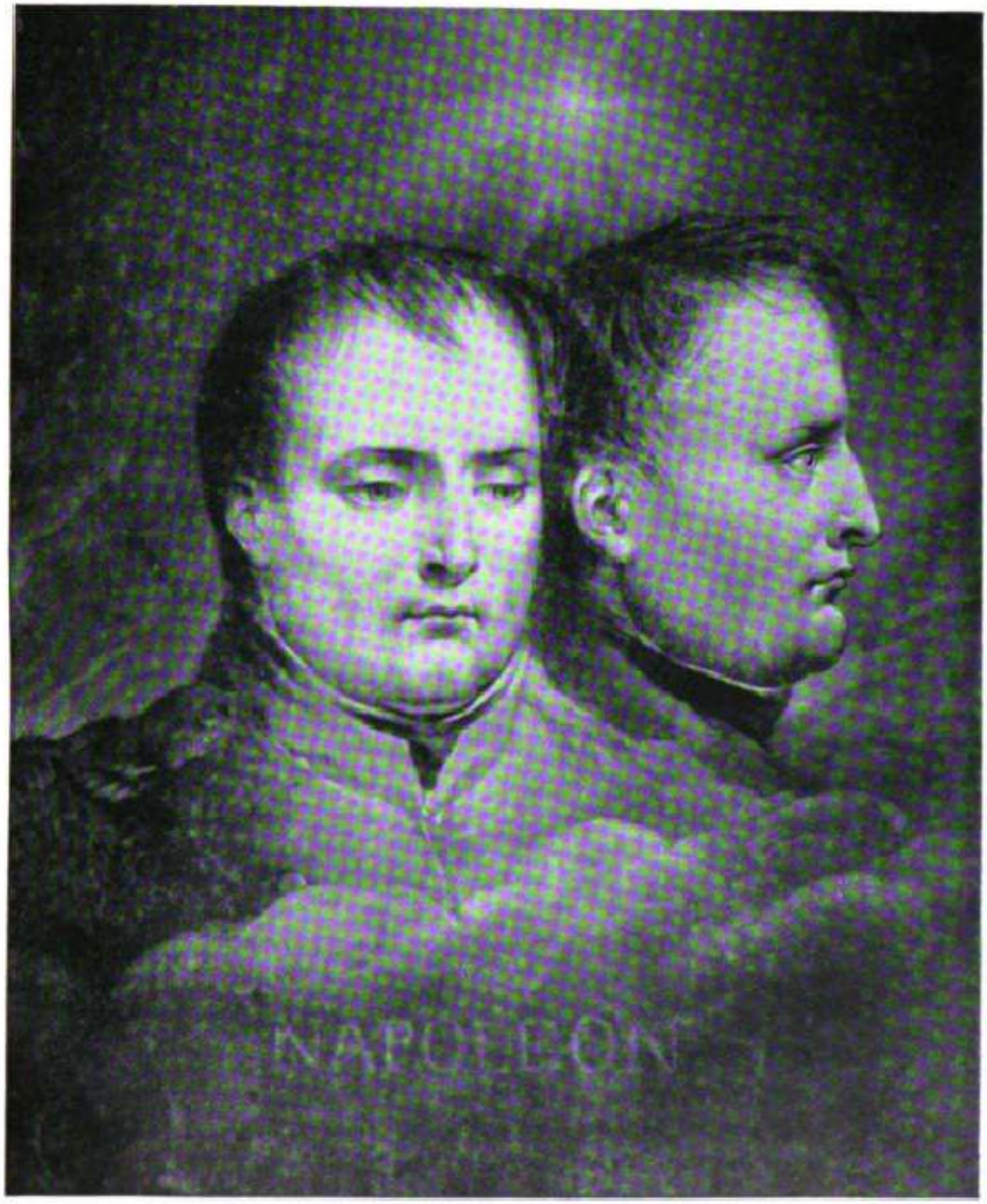

NAPOLEON I., AGED 43. 1812.

(From a Drawing by Girodet-Trioson.) [*Vol. I. p.* 215.

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CHAPTER X.

SIEGES OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND BADAJOS.

1812.

January, 1812. Appointment of a new Regency in Spain.
Changes in the British Cabinet.
,, 8 . . The Allies besiege Ciudad Rodrigo.
,, 19 . Assault and storm of Ciudad Rodrigo.
Disorderly scenes after the capture.
February 28 . Lord Wellington receives a British earldom and a Spanish dukedom.
He prepares to attack Badajos.
March 16 . . . Third siege of Badajos.
March 25 . . . The Picurina carried by storm.
April 6 . . . . General assault on Badajos.
Escalade and capture of the castle.
Failure of assault on the breaches.
Escalade and capture of the San Vincente Bastion.
,, 7 . . . . Surrender of the garrison.
Discontent of Napoleon with his Marshals.

AFTER the retreat of Masséna from Portugal, the presence of the Allies on the frontier in greater force, and, owing to the admirable state to which Beresford had brought the Portuguese troops of all arms, in far greater efficiency, than they had hitherto attained, gave a splendid opportunity to the Spanish authorities for operations corresponding to those which kept Marmont and Soult occupied in Estremadura and Salamanca. It is impossible within the limits of this memoir to follow the abundant correspondence conducted by Lord Wellington with his brother Henry at Cadiz and with the Spanish Generals in various provinces.

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ÆT. 42. With these last, indeed, he had found it impossible to operate in the field; but he never ceased to watch their movements, to avoid wounding their self-respect, and to recommend the measures which, with wide view, he perceived were essential to the success of the common cause.* That he failed to make them share his views, or, when they shared them, to act on them with ordinary energy and foresight, diminished in no degree the patience with which Wellington continued to advise, exhort, and warn. As it was, he summed up the results of the campaign in Portugal of 1811 with a degree of bitterness but without despondency.

"If the Spaniards had behaved with common prudence, or if their conduct had been even tolerably good, the result of Masséna's campaign in Portugal must have been the relief of the south of the Peninsula. We had to contend with the consequences of the faults of some, the treachery of others, the folly and vanity of all. But although our success has not been what it might and ought, we have lost no ground, and, with a handful of British troops fit for service, we have kept the enemy in check in all quarters since the month of March. Till now they have gained nothing, and have made no progress on any side."

Slender grounds for congratulation, it might be thought, at the end of four years' incessant warfare, yet Wellington was more full of confidence in ultimate success than ever. There was now no talk of Napoleon coming to the Peninsula; even the mighty engine of the conscription which he wielded over nearly the whole of Western Europe must be strained when, to the drafts of men for the Spanish war, should be added that of 400,000 more for the invasion of Russia.

* *Lt.-Gen. Viscount Wellington to Hon. Sir H. Wellesley.*

". . . I am very ready to state, upon all occasions, how my plans of operations can be aided by the Spanish troops; but it must be obvious that these plans must be founded on my own views of the state of affairs. I cannot adopt plans to forward the operations of such a corps as that of Ballasteros, or even of that of Galicia."

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At the beginning of 1812 a new Regency of five members was appointed in Spain, which at first gave tokens of better administration. Henry O'Donnell, reputed the best General in the Spanish service, and very friendly to the British alliance, was a member of it, and began a series of much-needed financial and military reforms. Of the last, one effect was to strike off the pay-list all officers except those actually serving with the army, a measure which affected no fewer than five thousand gentlemen! A new constitution was promulgated, abolishing autocratic power and centralising authority in a national assembly. It is vain, however, to devise schemes of government for a people who will not act except at the dictation of their priests. In spite of all the mediatory efforts of the British Cabinet and their minister at Cadiz, Sir Henry Wellesley, the new Government persisted in the conflict with the Spanish-American colonies, and actually diverted to that purpose some of the means which Great Britain had furnished for the defence of the Peninsula.*

ANN. 1812.

Appointment of a new Regency in Spain.

In the British Cabinet, also, important changes began to take place during the month of January. Lord Wellesley, who had disagreed with some of his colleagues, especially with the Prime Minister, Mr. Perceval, on questions of foreign policy, but had refrained from expressing dissent to any of their measures,† now resigned the seals of the Foreign Office, and was replaced by Lord Castlereagh. George III. having become hopelessly insane, it was expected that the Prince Regent would make this the opportunity for causing his Whig friends to form an administration; instead of which he proposed that some of them should serve under Mr. Perceval. This course was declined by the Opposition

Changes in the British Cabinet.

* The long conflict waged between Spain and her colonies seems to have been brought to a close at last. In January, 1899, after the cession of Cuba and the Philippines to the United States, the Spanish Ministry of the Colonies was abolished, on the ground that there was no longer any use for it.

† See Lord Liverpool's letter to Lord Wellington on the subject, *Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 257.

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ÆT. 42. leaders, and Perceval continued in office till his assassination by a maniac on the 11th May in the lobby of the House of Commons. Lord Liverpool then becoming Prime Minister, was followed at the War Office by Lord Bathurst, to whom Wellington's official despatches continued to be addressed till the end of the war.*

Wellington's position on the Coa had become dangerously scattered by the end of 1811, owing to the failure of the Portuguese authorities to furnish transport for supplies from Lisbon. Many of his troops had to be sent into the valleys of the Mondego and the Douro, but General Hill's movements in the district of Badajos diverted the attention of the enemy in that direction, and Marmont, on receiving the Emperor's orders to detach Montbrun to operate with two divisions in Valencia, had concentrated the rest of his force in the neighbourhood of Toledo. The defences of Almeida were repaired by the Allies; an efficient battering train was brought to that place, where a trestle bridge was secretly constructed for the passage of the Agueda; the soldiers were employed in making fascines and gabions, and all means were taken to prepare for the project Wellington had in view, namely, to snatch the prize of Ciudad Rodrigo in the very face of his foes. He took every precaution to lull the suspicions, not only of the enemy, but of his own officers, that any enterprise was in contemplation before the spring: he even allowed his Quartermaster-General, Murray, to go to England on leave.

* "If the Whigs had come into power on the Regency," said the Duke of Wellington to Lord de Ros, "they meant to have sent out Lord Hastings to me as a sort of commissioner. I am confident he would very soon have had the sense to perceive that he knew nothing of the case and that I had it at my fingers' ends. Whether the Whigs would have entered into the spirit of the general resistance of Europe, I can't pretend to say; but I could have answered any objections Lord Hastings might have made to my own part of the business, and convinced him and his employers that by the prosecution of the war much good would ensue, but neither danger nor harm need be apprehended" (*de Ros MS.*).

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ROBERT BANKS JENKINSON, 2ND EARL OF LIVERPOOL.

(After a Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.)

[*Vol. i. p.* 248.

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The new year opened in bitter cold; snow covered hill and valley, and a strong frost prevailed; but the health of the troops had greatly improved since the cessation of the rains. On 1st January the trestle bridge was begun at Marialva, and 35,000 Allies moved forward to the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. The garrison of that fortress was no more than 1,800 men, notwithstanding that early in December Napoleon had directed that it should be strengthened. Marmont, however, aware how much the Allies had suffered from sickness, and confident that they would not move from their cantonments during the severe weather, had neglected to do anything, and the garrison had provisions only for one month. ANN. 1812.

Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.

It was unwise to neglect anything in dealing with Wellington. On 8th January, 1812, the Light Division crossed the Agueda, partly by a ford, partly by the new bridge, and took up ground on the side of the Great Teson hill, where the French had constructed a redoubt detached from the fortress. The garrison, mistaking the Light Division for a reconnoitring party, saluted and bantered the English with good humour. Soon after nightfall they learnt their mistake, when Lieut.-Colonel Colborne of the 52nd * took ten companies to assault the redoubt. Covering the escalading party with a strong musketry fire from the glacis, Colborne sent Lieutenant Gurwood † with his company to scale the gorge of the redoubt. A French sergeant of artillery was shot dead in the act of throwing a live shell on this storming party; the shell rolled to the foot of the gate, exploded, and burst it open. Gurwood's party rushed in and the place was taken. Colborne earned great praise for this admirably planned and executed assault; a permanent lodgment was effected, and ground was broken under

* Afterwards Field Marshal Lord Seaton. It was he who, at Waterloo, made the decisive charge with his regiment on the flank of the Imperial Guard, when these were engaged with the British Guards.

† Editor of the Wellington *Despatches*.

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Æt. 42. cover of night within 600 yards of the *enceinte*. Finding that the approaches, continued night and day, were badly galled by the fire of two fortified convents to the right and left of the outwork, Wellington ordered that they should be taken. That on the right was surprised on the night of the 13th by a German regiment; the other was captured on the following night by H.M. 40th Regiment; whereby both flanks of the parallels were secured. In order to spare his troops as much as possible from exposure, Wellington ordered that each of the divisions of the army should relieve another in the trenches every twenty-four hours. But as each division had to ford the half-frozen river going and coming, there was a considerate allowance of double rations of spirits for the working divisions,* for "every man carried a pair of iced breeches into the trenches with him." † The siege was pushed with great vigour, for the British commander knew not when Marmont or Drouet might not appear to interrupt it; but General Hill was giving Drouet plenty of occupation near Badajos and Merida, and Marmont had moved north to Valladolid, to look after the revenues of that province and Salamanca, of which the Emperor had appointed him governor. On the 16th the defences had suffered so much under the fire of the besiegers that the place was summoned. General Barrie having replied that "he was ready to bury himself and his garrison in the ruins," the bombardment was resumed.

Wellington had calculated that not less "than 24 or 25 days would be required for the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo," ‡ but on the 19th, Major Sturgeon of the Staff Corps § having reported practicable two breaches in the fausse braie ¶ and

* *Despatches*, viii. 516.

† *Kincaid*, 104.

‡ *Despatches*, viii. 514.

§ Killed in action in 1813.

¶ A platform rising to half the height of the revêtement, or wall of the rampart facing the ditch. It was used as a position whence fire might be directed against the assailants, but it has been pronounced dangerous, because of the aid it affords to the escalade.

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Lieut. Gen.r Sir Thomas Picton, G.C.B.

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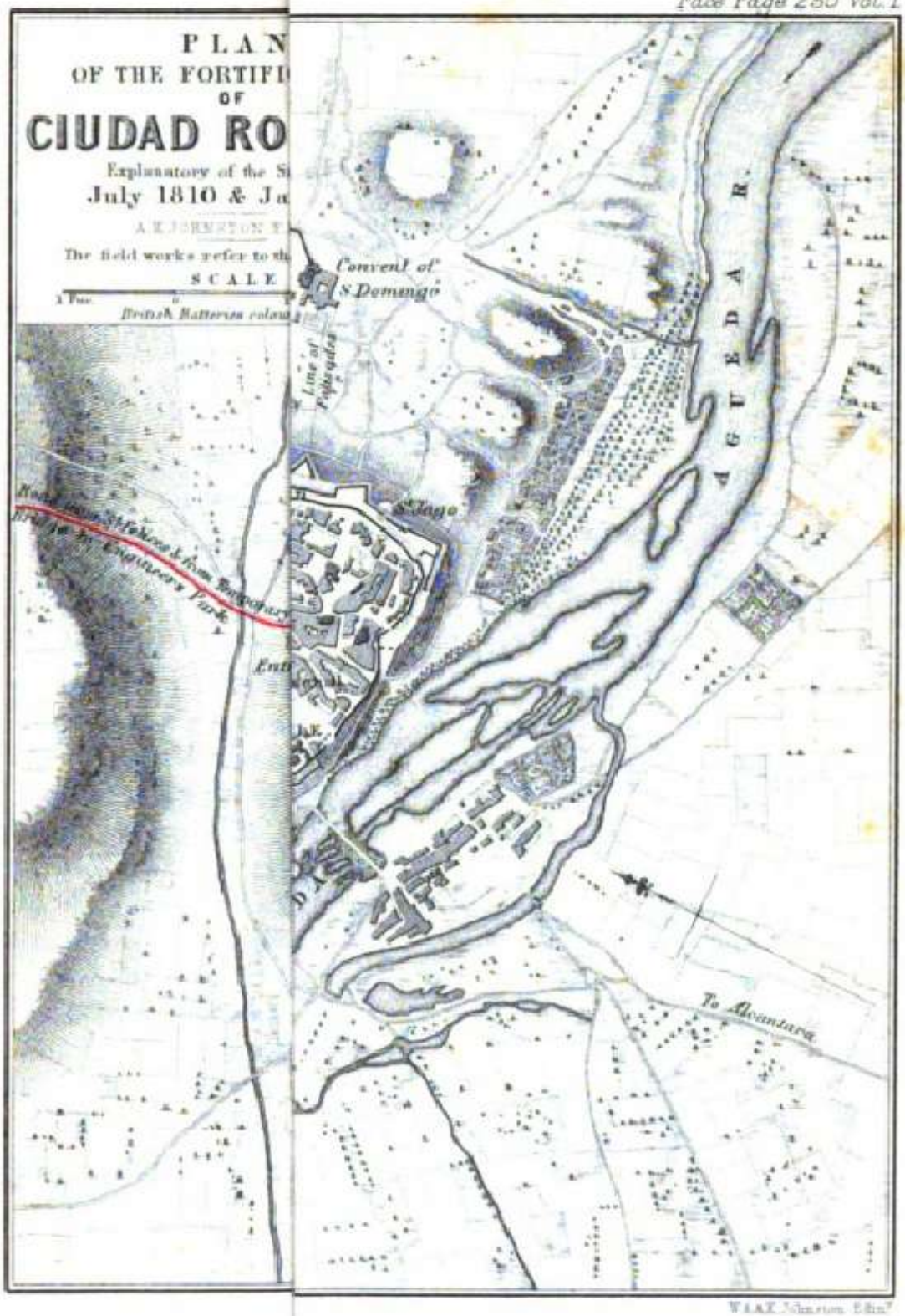

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body of the place, the assault was ordered for that evening, ANN. 1812.
although the approaches had not reached the crest of the glacis, and the counterscarp * of the ditch was still entire. Five columns were detailed for the assault, composed of the 3rd and Light Divisions and General Pack's Portuguese, the Light Division having been brought across the river out of their regular turn. The right attack was committed to Colonel O'Toole's caçadores and the light company of the 83rd Regiment, who were instructed to cross the bridge and scale an outwork below the castle, the 5th and 94th Regiments, with the 77th in reserve co-operating from behind the convent of Santa Cruz. In the centre, the 3rd Division —the Fighting Third, as they had come to be called—were to issue from the second parallel and attack the great breach; while, on the left, the Light Division was to come from behind the convent of San Francisco against the lesser breach and the gate of Salamanca. The fifth column, consisting of Pack's Portuguese, was sent round to the south-east of the town to make a false attack on the gate of Santiago. Assault on Ciudad Rodrigo.

It was five o'clock and falling dark, when strains of peculiarly soft music rose on the air. They came from the band of the 43rd Regiment without drums, preceding the Light Division *without their cruel leathern stocks*, on the way to its position in the attack. At the opposite side of the town, old General Picton spoke a few words to each of his battalions as they passed him. Battlefield orations have frequently been recorded, although, as reported, they probably retain faint resemblance to the originals; but Picton's speech to the 88th that evening was pithy enough to be borne in many a stout fellow's remembrance. "Connaught Rangers!" he cried, as the well-loved yellow facings caught his eye, "I don't mean to spend any powder this evening. We'll do this business with the *cauld iron*."

The storming party of the 3rd Division consisted of 500

* The outer wall of the ditch, generally faced with masonry.

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Æt. 42. volunteers under Major Manners of the 74th, with a forlorn hope led by Ensign Mackie of the Connaught Rangers; that of the Light Division of 300 volunteers led by Major George Napier* of the 52nd, and a forlorn hope under Mr. Gurwood.

The storm. The attack began prematurely on the right, and the storming parties of the 5th, 77th, and 94th had carried the fausse braie and were already at the great breach before those of the 3rd Division could reach the works. The parties of the Light Division, hearing the din, would not wait for the hay-bags which were to be thrown into the ditch before them, but dashed furiously to the storm of the lesser breach. Major Napier's arm was shattered by a cannon-shot; he had not allowed his men to load, bidding them trust to the bayonet; they were jammed in the narrow breach, falling fast under the fire of the defenders, but Napier called on them to press on; the 43rd and the rest of the 52nd came to their support, and in a few minutes the breach was carried, though with heavy loss. The 43rd, passing along the inside of the works, now made a flank attack on the defenders of the great breach, which, unlike the lesser one, had been protected by retrenchments, and offered a stronger resistance to the 3rd Division. The brave garrison, thus attacked in flank and front, were driven back fighting hard, but at last broke and made for the castle. By this time the town was full of the Allies, for Pack's Portuguese, albeit their attack had been intended only as a feint, had effected an entrance at the Santiago gate, and Colonel O'Toole also had entered the town from the west.

* Brother of Charles and of William, the historian, who both served in the Peninsula. George lost an arm in the assault on Ciudad Rodrigo, and, in writing to announce it to his mother, Lady Sarah Napier, Wellington said: "Having *such* sons, I am sure that you expect to hear of their misfortunes, which I have more than once had to communicate to you; and notwithstanding your affection for them, you have so just a notion of the value of the distinction they are daily acquiring for themselves, by their gallantry and good conduct, that their misfortunes do not make so great an impression on you."

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Ciudad Rodrigo was won: the fine paid by Marmont for his culpable negligence in leaving it with so weak a garrison being some 1,500 prisoners, 150 guns, great store of ammunition, and an entire battering train. The loss of the Allies, however, was deplorably heavy in the assault—9 officers and 169 soldiers killed, 70 officers and 748 soldiers wounded. There perished Robert Craufurd, the chivalrous, dauntless commander of the Light Division; an officer who, in spite of occasional indiscretion caused by his daring, had perhaps done more than any other General of division to re-establish the prestige of the British infantry.* He was buried on the ramparts of the captured fortress.

ANN. 1812. The capture.

Well was it for the conquerors that Marmont was not at hand to take advantage of their disorder on the morrow of the storm. Drink, so often and so deeply cursed by Wellington as the bane of the British soldier, wrecked the discipline which had ensured victory; wine and spirit stores were broken open; the whole town was turned into a hell of drunkenness and insubordination. Officers had profited much by their experience in warfare, but they were still far from perfect in that which Wellington constantly tried to convince them was as necessary as gallantry in the field—careful and patient control of their men in quarters and after an action.

Disorderly conduct of the troops.

* Craufurd, in spite of his brilliant qualities, was not an easy man to get on with, and it is well known that he was not only sometimes disobedient, but also disloyal to his chief. "Charles Stewart (Adjutant-General in the Peninsula, and afterwards third Marquis of Londonderry) intrigued in the army against me, and, with the assistance of Robert Craufurd, had turned every one of the general officers against me, except Beresford, who, like a good fellow and honest soldier as he is, discountenanced all these petty intrigues. . . . Poor Craufurd was a dissatisfied, troublesome kind of man, who fell quite naturally into this sort of intrigue, and I believe he pushed it to a very blameable extent; for when he was mortally wounded he sent for me, and there, in the way one has read of in romances, he solemnly asked my forgiveness for injuries of that kind which he had done, or endeavoured to do me" (*Croker*, i. 346). When a commissary of the Light Division once complained to Lord Wellington that Craufurd had threatened to hang him if the supplies were not more punctually delivered, the chief replied drily, "Then I advise you to have them up in time, for Craufurd is just the man to keep his word" (*Tomkinson*, 30).

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Punishment of deserters.

When order was at length restored, there remained some painful duties to be discharged. It is difficult to understand what motives could have induced men besieging this town to desert by joining the beleaguered garrison. Perhaps a common cause was the fear of corporal punishment which these individuals may have incurred;* at all events, many deserters from the allied army were taken in Ciudad Rodrigo. To every one who could obtain a fair character from his commanding officer, Wellington showed mercy, but six men, who could not do so, were shot. Carlos d'España, also, ordered the execution of certain of the Spanish townspeople, who were proved to have been employed by the French.

Want of harmony among the French commanders.

Marmont at this period displayed a degree of hesitancy for which he was not greatly to blame, considering the intrigue and corruption which prevailed at the Spanish capital, though it afforded Wellington greater leisure than he had any reason to reckon on. Napoleon had forced Joseph to cancel his abdication and return to Madrid in July, 1811, and, desirous of concentrating his own energies in the struggle with Russia, had re-committed to his brother the chief control of the armies in the Peninsula. The Marshals, jealous as they were of each other, were at least united in despising the authority of the King of Spain, and the King's part was rendered doubly difficult by Napoleon's practice of sending instructions from Paris direct to the various Marshals in the field. All this was greatly in

* Wellington described to Lady Salisbury the extraordinary propensity to desert in the English army, especially from the besieging force into the besieged place. "They knew," said he, "they must be taken, for, when we lay our bloody hands on a place, we are sure to take it sooner or later; but they liked being dry and under cover, and then that extraordinary caprice which always pervades the English character! Our deserters were very badly treated by the enemy; those who deserted in France were treated as the lowest of mortals—slaves and scavengers. Nothing but English caprice can account for it; just what make our noblemen associate with stage-coach drivers, and become stage-coach drivers themselves" (*Salisbury MSS.*, 1837).

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Wellington's favour; nor did he neglect to take full advantage thereof. Moreover, affairs in the South had taken a turn more favourable to the Spanish arms. During the autumn of 1811 Ballasteros had scored several successes against Soult's divisions in Andalusia; at Tarifa, Colonel Skerret had maintained such a stout defence that General Hill's movements in Estremadura had obliged Soult to raise the siege on 4th January, in order to protect Seville. On the other hand, Blake, after a siege of eight days, had surrendered to Suchet the town of Valencia with 18,000 regular troops and 400 guns, whereby the richest province in Spain passed into the hands of the French, and the armies of Aragon and Catalonia were set free to co-operate with Soult. ANN. 1812.

Having repaired the breaches and outworks of Ciudad Rodrigo, and levelled his own trenches, Lord Wellington handed the place over to Castaños, Captain-General of Estremadura and Galicia; for the Cortes had not yet conferred any authority upon the Commander of the allied forces; he was not even an ally, in a military sense, only a friendly intruder. They awarded him, however, an enthusiastic vote of thanks, made him a grandee of the first rank, and created him Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo; while the Prince Regent advanced him to the dignity of an Earl in the British peerage, and Parliament granted him a further pension of £2,000 a year. Wellington is created a British Earl and a Spanish Duke.

Encouraged by the inaction of Marmont, who seemed to be paralysed by the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington lost not an hour in preparing for a similar dash at Badajos. The seasonal flooding of the rivers would shortly render the invasion of Beira impossible to the French, which would justify him in moving the greater part of the allied forces into the Alemtejo, if he got the opportunity of doing so. The opportunity came as neatly as if he had been able to arrange it himself. Marmont had been desirous of protecting Badajos; the Emperor told him sharply to mind his

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own business, which was to draw Wellington northwards by making an offensive movement upon the Mondego. Though Wellington's movements, owing to their suddenness and the secrecy of his preparations, appeared to be precipitate, they had been thought out long before.*

Wellington prepares to attack Badajos.

Early in December he had ordered a pontoon bridge to be brought up the Tagus to Abrantes, and draft oxen to be collected there for its transport by land, while 2,000 men were employed preparing siege material at Elvas. The usual delays about transport prevented the pontoons being laid over the Guadiana till the 15th March. On the 16th Beresford, who had rejoined the army, crossed the river and began the third siege of Badajos with 15,000 men of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Light Divisions and Hamilton's Portuguese. At the same time General Hill advanced from Albuquerque by Merida upon Almendralejos, to keep in check Drouet, who lay with 5,000 men at Villafranca; while General Graham, crossing the Guadiana with the 1st, 6th, and 7th Divisions, and two brigades of cavalry, moved forward to Llerena to observe Soult. The 5th Division remained in reserve at Campo Mayor. Altogether the allied forces in Estremadura at this time amounted to 51,000, of which 31,000 were British.

Third siege of Badajos.

The defences of Badajos had been greatly strengthened and extended since the last attempt on it by the British, the exposed bastions had been mined, the place was well-provisioned, and General Philippon's garrison was 5,000

* It might be supposed that Wellington had his hands and head full enough at this time without being called on for advice on other subjects. Nevertheless on 12th and 13th March he found time to write two long letters to Lord Melville, who had asked his opinion on certain points connected with the civil and military administration of India. Wellington's reply is expressed with his usual clearness and attention to detail; and it is interesting to find that, in his opinion, the chief objection to the assumption by the Crown of the administrative functions of the Company, would be found in the difficulty of keeping the Indian army officered by competent men, if the control of it were taken from the Company. But he warmly advocated the permission of exchange between officers of the King's and the Company's service (*Despatches*, viii. 614–619).

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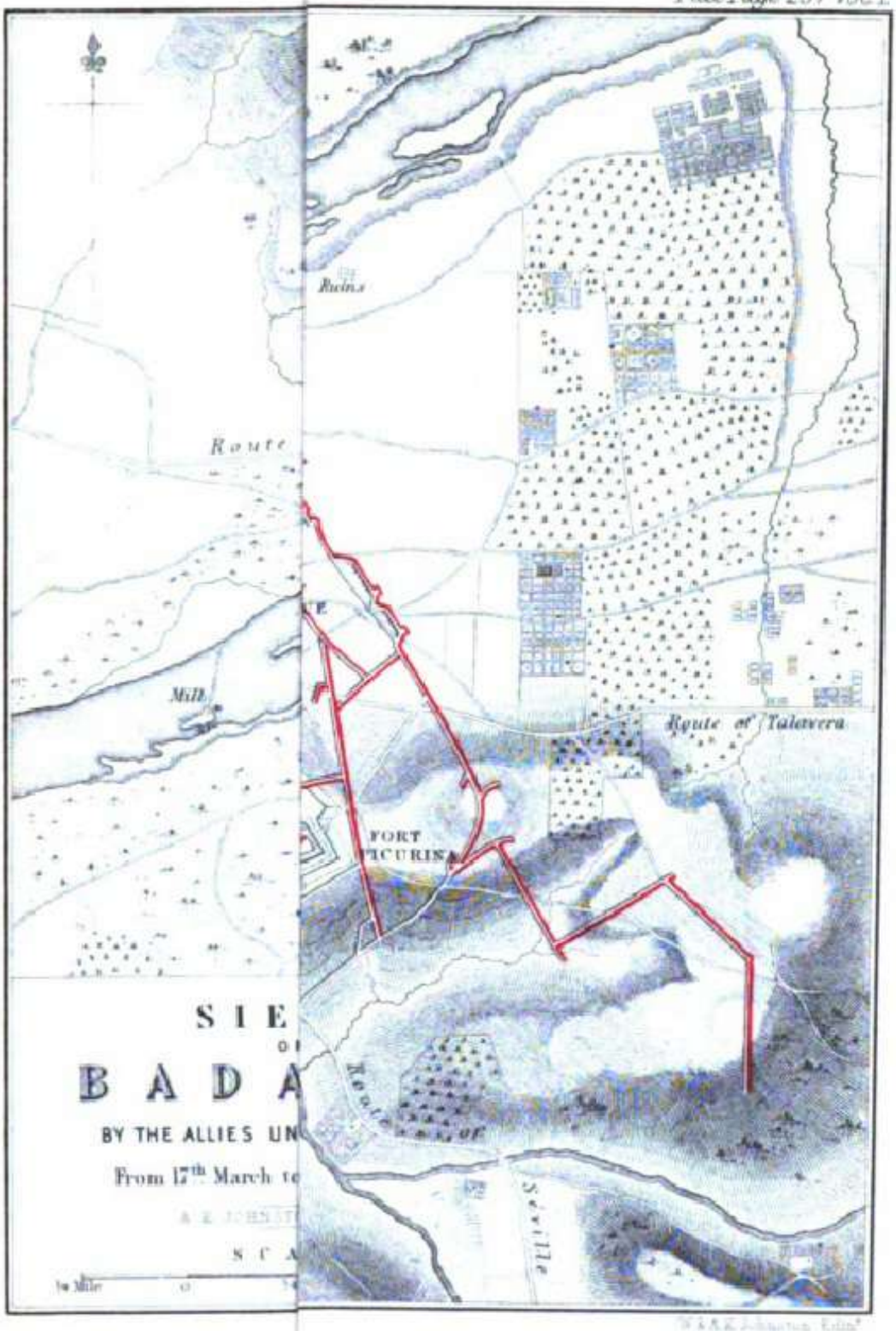

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strong. Yet there was no time to spare on orthodox means of reduction; here, as at Ciudad Rodrigo, affairs must be conducted *brevi manu*, or not undertaken at all. ANN. 1812.

Ground was broken on the stormy night of 17th March, St. Patrick's Day, which the British soldiers considered a propitious circumstance. A parallel was opened against the Fort Picurina, which occupied an eminence outside and opposite the bastion of Trinidad. Colonel Fletcher, of Torres Vedras fame, directed the works, but was wounded in the groin during a sortie on the night of the 19th; a bullet striking some dollars in his pocket, which probably saved his life.* Rain fell incessantly, raising the Guadiana to such a height as to sink the pontoons. Provisions, guns, and siege material still lay on the north bank; the "croakers" declared, not without good reason, that the siege must be abandoned; indeed, the situation was a serious one. However, in a few days the river began to fall, some Portuguese boats were brought up to make a new bridge; on the 24th the investment was completed by the 5th Division occupying the right bank, and the batteries were armed. Fire was opened on the 25th; that night 500 men of the 3rd Division stormed the Picurina redoubt after an hour's desperate fighting, in which 4 British officers and 50 men perished, and 15 officers and 250 men were wounded. The Picurina carried by storm.

The loss of the Picurina was a serious one for General Philippon, because, although the fire from the town rendered it untenable by the Allies, they constructed new batteries on its flanks, and a brisk artillery duel continued during several days. It was not, however, till 1st April that the fire of the besiegers began to tell on the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions. On the 3rd April the breaches were pronounced practicable. The *lunette*† San Roque contained a dam which inundated the hollow between the Picurina and the

* *Dumaresq MSS.*

† *Lunette:* a small work strengthening a ravelin or bastion, with one face at right angles to it.

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town, entirely precluding a front attack, and Wellington, after ordering an attack for the evening of the 3rd, countermanded it, and directed that a breach should be made in the curtain between the Santa Maria and Trinidad bastions.

Threatened approach of Soult and Marmont.

At the last moment it seemed as if the siege must be raised, for Soult, having marched from Seville on 1st April, had advanced to Llerena, only three marches distant, and Marmont was about to move from Salamanca. Graham fell back upon Albuera, and Hill passed through Merida, destroying two of the sixty-four arches of the fine Roman bridge there.

It was good to hear on the morning of the 5th that Soult was still at Llerena. The curtain was effectually breached on the 6th, and Wellington, who had been about to reinforce Graham at Albuera, decided to hold his ground, and ordered 18,000 men for the assault that night. He omitted the customary formality of summoning Philippon to surrender, which has been the foundation of reproaches not altogether easy to answer. The omission is the more difficult to explain because Wellington always maintained that, by the laws of war, a garrison which had been summoned after a practicable breach had been rendered in the body of the place defended, was entitled to no quarter after standing a storm. He disapproved of any modification of this rule, believing it to be merciful in the end, as tending to discourage commanders allowing a storm—of all forms of combat the most costly in human lives.

The storm.

After dark, therefore, on 6th April, the troops fell in for the assault. General Picton's 3rd Division was to attempt the escalade of the castle and the ravelin of San Roque. On the extreme left the 5th Division, under General Leith, was to make a feint on the Pardaleras redoubt, and a real attack on the bastion of San Vincente. To the Light Division, commanded by Colonel Barnard,* an able substitute for the

* Afterwards Lieut.-Gen. Sir Andrew Barnard, K.C.B.: wounded at Waterloo in command of 1st battalion 95th.

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lost Craufurd, was committed the attack on the breach in the Santa Maria bastion, while General the Hon. C. Colville* directed the 4th Division against the breaches in the curtain and the bastion of Trinidad. The Portuguese brigade of General Power, on the right bank of the Guadiana, were commissioned to perform false attacks on the tête-du-pont and Fort San Christoval. Each division of course was preceded by its forlorn hope and storming party. ANN. 1812.

About half-past nine on that still and profoundly dark night the columns stood under arms ready for the attack, which was to take place on all sides at 10 o'clock. Modern search-lights there were none, but the garrison having discovered by means of fireballs the positions of the 3rd Division, Picton directed the assault on the castle before the prescribed hour, and the other columns then hurried forward to the ditch. The first troops to obtain a footing were 200 men under Major Wilson of the 48th, who carried the ravelin† of San Roque, and established themselves within the work. This was mere child's play compared to the task of Picton's escalading party, before whom the castle rose—a sheer cliff of masonry—to the height of eighteen or twenty feet. Under a shattering musketry fire these dauntless fellows forded the Rivillas, crept along the foot of the wall, and reared their long ladders, only to have them thrown down by the defenders. The assault was repulsed once; but Lieut.-Colonel Ridge of the 5th Foot, who had well won his promotion at El Bodon, rushed forward, and directed his men to place two unbroken ladders to the right of where the first attack had failed. He himself set the first foot on the rampart, and, closely followed by a handful of his fusiliers, actually drove the garrison before him into the town, and won the castle before half-past eleven. He did not live to enjoy his triumph, but fell in repelling an unsuccessful

Escalade and capture of the castle.

* Father of the present Lord Colville of Culross.

† *Ravelin:* a detached work of two faces at salient angles, in front of the counterscarp.

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attempt by a detachment from the garrison to re-enter the gate.

On the side of the fortifications furthest from the castle terrific carnage was taking place. All remained silent within that part of the works while the storming parties of the 4th and Light Divisions crossed the glacis, though the uproar at the castle could be heard plainly across the town. Throwing their hay-packs into the ditch before them, the men leapt down into the dark gulf. In a moment, with deafening roar, it became one chasm of flame. Nearly every soldier in the head of that column perished by the explosion of materials laid by the defenders; powder barrels, live shells, and fire-balls thundered down from the rampart; still the columns behind pressed on furiously to the breaches. The tumult was bewildering, the confusion hopeless. The head of the 4th Division, turning darkly to the right, became involved in the inundation from the Rivillas; many perished by drowning; water, fire, cold steel, and solid masonry seemed to be combined on that dreadful night for the destruction of the flower of the British army. The two divisions were inextricably mixed; officers and men of each swarmed pell-mell up the debris under the breaches, only to find the passages barred from side to side by a dense hedge of sword blades, ground on both edges to the keenness of razors, fixed in heavy beams built into the masonry. For two hours the fruitless attempt was maintained; reckless of life, heedless of wounds and death, braving the fiery tempest poured on them, and the stinging jeers of the defendants, they persevered till midnight, when Wellington, from his station in the quarry opposite the Santa Maria bastion, ordered their recall.*

Failure of the assault on the breaches.

* Colonel Jones, the chief British authority on the sieges of the Peninsular war, has stated that the breaches would have been readily carried, had they been properly assaulted by strong columns, but denies that at any time there were more than fifty men ascending either breach in compact order. In the prevailing darkness, chief cause of the confusion, it must have been difficult to estimate the numbers attacking the breaches at any one time during these

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MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JAMES LEITH, K.C.B.

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ANN. 1812.

Meanwhile, it had fared better with General Leith's division on the extreme left. While Leith himself made a false attack on the Pardaleras, he sent forward General Walker's brigade to attempt the escalade of the San Vincente bastion. The ladders were too short by several feet, yet, profiting by the diversion caused by the assault on the castle, the forlorn hope struggled man by man over the parapet, and the bastion was gained. General Leith then brought in the 38th Regiment and 15th Caçadores, and occupied the town.

Escalade and capture of the San Vincente bastion.

The shattered ranks of the 4th and Light Divisions had been re-formed, and were about to advance once more to attack the breaches in the grey dawn. Mercifully they were spared the sacrifice: General Philippon, who was wounded, having retired across the river to fort Christoval, surrendered at daylight with his whole garrison.

Surrender of the garrison.

	Officers.	Sergeants.	Rank and File.	Total.
Killed ...	72	51	912	1035
Wounded ...	306	216	3265	3787
Missing ...	—	1	62	63

Such was the woeful price paid by the Allies for the possession of Badajos—a price which nothing but the absolute necessity of possession could justify. It is on record that when the particulars of the loss were laid before Wellington his habitual composure failed him and, for the first and last time in his career, he gave way to a brief storm of grief.* The responsibility for the loss of so many of his soldiers was one, indeed, which it required an iron spirit to sustain; it

terrible two hours; at all events the account given by Colonel Jones, in a private letter written to Major Chapman the day following the storm, contains no such reflections on the conduct of the 4th and Light Divisions, and gives a vivid description of the formidable nature of the defences (*Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 311). The breach in the curtain was never assailed: in fact, the assaulting parties lost their way as soon as the Engineer officer who was to guide them was killed (*Jones*, i. 230).

* *Napier*, iv. 433.

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Æt. 42. was one of those tests which none but master minds may sustain. That Soult loitered at Llerena, instead of pressing forward to raise the siege, shows that he believed that in the siege of Badajos Wellington was undertaking that which must keep him employed for months. He did not reckon on that genius which, working, as all genius must, by approved rule in ninety-nine cases, rises superior to all rules in the hundredth, and accomplishes what mere experts pronounce to be impossible.

"Lord Wellington," wrote General Lery, engineer-in-chief of the army of the South, to General Kellerman, "has taken the place in the presence, as it were, of two armies, amounting together to about 80,000 men. . . . I think the capture of Badajos a very extraordinary event; and I should be much at a loss to account for it in any manner consistent with probability."*

The shield of Badajos must reflect through all time the lustre of the allied arms of Britain and Portugal, yet candour compels that the reverse also should be shown for a moment. The storm of the works was followed by the sack of the town, of which the full horrors may scarcely be told. It may seem inconceivable that British troops should behave in the demoniac fashion of Wellington's in the hour of success; perhaps under the altered conditions of warfare they may never be submitted to a similar test. Certain it is that during forty-eight hours after the capitulation plunder, murder, and every kind of drunken violence raged in the streets of that unhappy town. The captive garrison were respected, but the Spanish inhabitants paid an awful penalty for some shots which had been fired from dwelling-houses when the British entered the streets from the San Vincente quarter. All the houses were shut, but the doors were easily forced. The inhabitants, in self-defence, lighted candles in

Horrors of the sack.

* Major Jones observes that it is perhaps without parallel in the history of sieges that the assaults on three good, practicable breaches should fail, while two escalades should succeed at places where the defences remained entire.

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their ground-floor rooms, set plenty of aguadente on the tables, and concealed themselves upstairs. The soldiers flew upon the spirit, and set off plundering. When Wellington rode in on the morning of the 7th, they began firing ball cartridges in his honour, and very nearly killed him.* It was not till the 9th that order was re-established. ANN. 1812.

In the position which Wellington had secured by the capture of the two chief frontier fortresses was found full value even for the terrible price he had paid in the lives of his soldiers. True, there were three armies before him—Soult on his right, with 24,000 men; Marmont on his left, with 69,000, threatening Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, in tardy obedience to the Emperor's orders; while the King was in the centre with 20,000, chiefly anxious to protect the approaches to his capital. British as well as foreign critics have objected to Wellington's operations against Badajos as unmilitary, have attributed their success to fortune, and have pointed out that if Marmont had obeyed the Emperor's instructions in February, he would have successfully raised the siege. Perhaps so, but Marmont's inability to keep the army of Portugal concentrated was well known to Wellington; the difficulty arising from the French system of making an army feed itself was a constant factor in his calculations; and, in common with the other Marshals, Marmont laboured under the additional difficulty of receiving instructions from the Emperor 900 miles away, which it was impossible to reconcile either with those which he received from Soult, his superior, who wished him to cross the Tagus and combine with the army of the South, or with the physical and topographical conditions with which he had to contend. The fact is that Napoleon was attempting the impossible. It has been the persistent habit of one writer after another to extol his generalship as far superior to Wellington's, or that of any other commander during the present century, without regard to the arrogance with which he rebuked the failure of his

Napoleon's displeasure with his marshals.

* *De Ros MS.; Tomkinson.*

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Æt. 42. officers in a distant field under circumstances he could not be aware of, the reckless inconsistency of his orders to them, and his cruel indifference to the difficulties of brave and skilful Generals and troops attempting to carry out his contradictory and impracticable instructions. Present with his troops and with the field of action under his eye, Napoleon was matchless as a commander; but seated at a distant desk he was as much subject to conditions of time and space as humbler individuals. The evidence of the following extracts, placed in parallel columns with the replies of those to whom they were addressed, would lower a lesser man from the rank of strategist to that of charlatan; they have been overlooked or condoned in the case of Napoleon because of the maze of mighty complications in which he had involved the whole of Western Europe.

Marshal Berthier to Marshal Marmont.

"Paris, 11th February, 1812.

"The Emperor regrets that, with Souham's division and the other three divisions you had assembled, you did not return towards Salamanca to see what was going on. That would have given the English a good deal to think about, and you might have been useful to Ciudad Rodrigo.

"The way to help the army of the South in the position you are in is to place your headquarters at Salamanca, to

Marshal Marmont to Marshal Berthier.

"Valladolid, 26th February, 1812.

"The more I consider your letters of 11th February, the more firmly I am convinced that if his Majesty were in these parts he would take a totally different view of the position of the army of Portugal. Your Highness tells me that I ought to have concentrated my troops at Salamanca, but you forget that previously the Emperor's orders were to keep three divisions beyond the mountains.

"If I were to concentrate the army on Salamanca, it could not subsist there for a fortnight. . . . If the army moved to-day

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concentrate your army there, detaching one division only on the Tagus, to re-occupy the Asturias and force the enemy to remain at Almeida and in the north, from fear of invasion. You might even move detachments on Ciudad Rodrigo; if you have the necessary siege artillery take that place, for your honour is involved. Otherwise, if want of provisions or artillery oblige you to postpone that operation till harvest, you may at least make an incursion into Portugal, and move on the Douro and Almeida. . . . I repeat, therefore; the Emperor's instructions are that you do not quit Salamanca, that you cause the Asturias to be re-occupied, that your army rests in the position of Salamanca, and that you menace the English."

"Paris, 18th February.

"His Majesty is not satisfied with the direction you are giving on Ciudad Rodrigo, it could not cross the Agueda, because that river is unfordable at this season. The army could not remain three days before Ciudad Rodrigo, for want of provisions. . . . Your Highness talks to me of the siege of Rodrigo. If I receive means of transport and siege equipage, this may be undertaken easily after the harvest; but before it, and in the absence of means, it is not to be thought of. Your Highness tells me that my honour is involved in the recapture of this place. It will always be a matter of honour with me to do all that is useful to the Emperor's service, but I have in this matter no fault to retrieve. . . . If circumstances had permitted this frontier to be placed sooner in my charge, Rodrigo would still be ours. . . . Perhaps his Majesty will not be satisfied with my reasons . . . if he judges differently I shall urgently renew my entreaty that he will appoint a successor to my command. . . . I hope . . . that he will relieve me of a burden which is beyond my powers."

ANN. 1812.

"Valladolid, 2nd March.

"The army of Portugal is quite strong enough to beat the

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Æt. 42.

ing to the war; you are stronger than the enemy, yet, instead of taking the initiative, you persist in letting him do so.

English army, but it is inferior to the English in operative power, because of the lack of means. The English army, having magazines prepared in advance and sufficient means of transport, subsists everywhere equally well. The army of Portugal, without magazines and with very weak transport, cannot subsist except by remaining dispersed.

"You march about and fatigue your troops; that is no part of the art of war.

"Nobody is more anxious than I am to spare my troops fatigue, and I cannot think that the Emperor's observation can apply to the detachments in the valley of the Tagus, because it was not I who sent them there.

"The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo is a check to you. . . . General Hill's movement on the Tagus was made in the belief that, as soon as you heard of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, you would collect your troops and march rapidly on that place, and invest it, taking advantage of the breach not being repaired, and the want of time required to throw in provisions.

"Your Highness accuses me of being the cause of the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo; I hold that I had nothing to do with it. Rodrigo was taken because the garrison was too weak, and because the Commander-in-chief of the army of the North (Dorsenne) was equally destitute of vigilance and foresight. I could not keep my eye on the place, seeing that I was separated from it by a chain of mountains and by the desert created in the valley of the Tagus by the six months' occupation by the army.

"Once a resolution is formed,

"The Emperor seems to think

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you must keep to it. There is neither 'if' nor 'but.' You must choose your position near Salamanca, be the conqueror or perish with the French army on the battlefield of your choice.

"The real road to Lisbon is by the north; the enemy, having considerable magazines and his hospitals in that quarter, can only retire very slowly on the capital.

"By allowing the initiative to the enemy instead of taking it, by thinking continually of the army of the South (Soult's), which has no need of you that I am not firm in my resolves: I cannot think what can have led his Majesty to form this opinion. When I have thought it any use to fight, I do not know that anything has ever altered my determination. ANN. 1812.

"His Majesty seems to think that Lord Wellington has his magazines not far from the northern frontier; his magazines are at Abrantes and in Estremadura; his hospitals are in Lisbon, Castello Branco and Abrantes, so he has nothing to protect on the Coa. Your Highness says that the real route to Lisbon is by the north; I believe that those who know this country are convinced of the contrary. As for myself, I am persuaded that as sure as the principal corps d'armée takes that direction, it will be exposed to every kind of disaster, and that the right road to take is that of the Alemtejo. I explained the reasons for this in a memorandum which I had the honour of addressing to you three months ago.

"Your Highness writes that the Emperor is of opinion that I occupy myself too much with the interests of others, and not enough with those specially

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Æt. 42.

because it contains 80,000 of the best troops in Europe, in occupying your thoughts about districts which are not in your command, and in abandoning the Asturias and the provinces committed to you, you ensure any reverse that you may experience being *felt throughout the whole of Spain.*

"Your position is plain and simple. . . . Dispose your army so that in four marches the troops may collect at Salamanca. . . . Keep up continual skirmishing with the enemy's outposts. . . . You ought to make prisoners every day with your advanced guards.

"The Emperor desires that, twenty-four hours after receiving this letter, you will march for Salamanca, barring unforeseen events: that you will direct an advanced guard to occupy the defiles about Ciudad Rodrigo, and another on those about Almeida."

committed to me. Until now I regarded co-operation with the army of the South as one of the duties imposed on me by the Emperor, and this duty has been expressly enjoined in a score of your despatches, and made clear afresh by the order I received to leave three divisions in the valley of the Tagus. Now that I am relieved of it, my position becomes more simple and far better.

"His Majesty wishes that my outposts shall exchange shots every day with the English; his Majesty then is not aware that, from the nature of things and because of the absolute want of subsistence, there are always at least twenty leagues between the English advanced posts and ours, and that this interval is occupied by guerillas; so that, if I detach large bodies, they die of hunger; if small ones, they are compromised.

"His Majesty's orders are so imperative that I consider it my duty to obey, notwithstanding the reasons which have hitherto prevented my conforming to them. . . . But as it is evident that the siege of Badajos has been postponed only because of the presence of these three divisions (in the

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Tagus valley), my opinion is that this movement will expose that place to danger. I venture to hope, at least, that if evil happens to Badajos, the blame will not be laid on me.* . . . Your Highness speaks of occupying the defiles of Almeida and Rodrigo. The country between the Agueda and the Tormes is an immense plain, practicable in every sense; I cannot understand, therefore, what is meant by these 'defiles' (*débouchés*)." ANN. 1812.

And so the interminable wrangle dragged on, not with Marmont alone, for similar scoldings were launched on the commanders of the other armies also. Each was told that he, and he alone, was responsible for the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Marshal Berthier to General Dorsenne, commanding the army of the North.

"Paris, 11th February, 1812.

"The Emperor is extremely displeased with your negligence in this whole affair of Ciudad Rodrigo.

"How is it that you had not news from that place twice a week?

General Dorsenne to Marshal Berthier.

"Burgos, 23rd February, 1812.

"If your Excellency had been pleased to read my despatches of 15th, 16th, and 23rd January before writing yours of the 11th, you would have seen that I was in no degree to blame about Ciudad Rodrigo.

"I ordered General Barrié to send me reports, not twice a week, but every day. They were intercepted—was that my fault?

* Badajos was stormed three weeks later

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Æt. 42.

"This humiliating check can be attributed only to want of precaution on your part, and to the inconsiderate measures you adopted."

"If the Emperor does not change his unfavourable opinion of me, I beg he will recall me, as I cannot remain in Spain with the conviction of having lost his confidence."

There were, besides, constant complaints forwarded to the Emperor by the commander of each of the four armies against the others; but the only heed paid by Napoleon to these, or to the remonstrances and explanations of the unhappy Marmont, was that he directed fresh reproaches to be penned by Berthier.

Marshal Berthier to Marshal Marmont.

"Paris, 16th April, 1812.

"I have laid before the Emperor, M. le Maréchal, your letters of 22nd and 25th March. In my despatches of 18th and 20th February I indicated to you the measures necessary for taking the initiative and giving to the war a character worthy of the glory of the French arms, and putting an end to your persistent fumbling (*tâtonnement*) and hesitancy, which form the presage of a beaten army. But instead of trying to seize the spirit of general instructions given to you, you seem quite pleased with your failure to understand them, and to take up the exact opposite of their intention. These instructions are well considered, and have a purpose (*sont raisonnées et motivées*). Like all instructions of a Government, they have been issued at three hundred leagues distance and six weeks interval. It was assumed that you were in presence of the enemy, and they directed you to hold him in check. . . . The Emperor charges you to second the King, and, from devotion to his person and for the glory of his arms, to do everything in your power to prevent 40,000 English ruining the Peninsula, which will certainly take place unless the commanders of the various corps are animated with that zeal for glory and that patriotism which alone can surmount difficulties, and prevent the public interest suffering from private prejudice or ill temper."

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The secret of the disasters which had began to fall thick and fast on the once invincible arms of France was shrewdly expressed in a letter to a friend from General Léry, writing from Seville on 20th April. ANN. 1812.

"Seville, 20th April, 1812.

"The journals, my dear ——, will have apprised you of the unhappy end of Badajos. . . . I confess that I don't understand this poor resistance by a sufficient garrison, more than commonly well supplied. . . . All our calculations are upset. The army of Portugal (Marmont's) marched away from ours (Soult's) when it ought to have co-operated; and thus Wellington . . . has seized this place under the beards of two corps amounting together to 80,000 men! That is what comes of having no supreme chief at hand to combine the movements of each corps." *

* *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 39.

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CHAPTER XI.

Campaign of Salamanca,

1812.

May 18 . 1812. Destruction of the bridge at Almaraz. Position and strength of the armies.

June 13 . . . . . Advance of the Allies into Castile.

„ 17 . . . . . They enter Salamanca.

„ 17-27 . . . Reduction of the forts.

„ 28 . . . . . Marmont resumes his retreat.

July 20 . . . . . Wellington outmanœuvred by Marmont.

„ 22 . . . . Battle of Salamanca. Retreat of the French.

„ 23 . . . . . Fine charge of German cavalry.

October 8 . . . . Wellington is advanced to the rank of Marquis.

Napoleon's anger with Marmont.

Movements of King Joseph with the army of the Centre.

„ 30 . . . The Allies enter Valladolid.

August 10 . . . King Joseph flies from Madrid.

„ 12 . . . The Allies enter Madrid.

September 1 . . Wellington marches from Madrid against Clausel.

„ 19 . Siege of Burgos begun.

September 22 . Lord Wellington appointed Commander-in-chief of the Spanish armies.

Resentment of Ballesteros and consequent advance of Soult.

October 18 . . . Souham, superseding Clausel, advances to relieve Burgos.

„ 21 . . . Siege of Burgos raised: the Allies begin their retreat to the Douro.

Wellington's foxhounds.

November 13 . . Wellington awaits attack on the Aripeles.

„ 15 . . Retreat resumed.

„ 17 . . Lieut.-General Sir E. Paget taken prisoner.

The Allies go into winter quarters on the frontier.

Disorders and losses of the retreat.

Wellington rebukes his officers.

March 13, 1813. Festivities at Ciudad Rodrigo.

Wellington's extraordinary powers of endurance.

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DON MIGUEL RICARDO D'ALAVA.
(*From a Painting at Apsley House.*)

[*Vol. i. p.* 272.

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AFTER the fall of Badajos, Soult returned into Andalusia to maintain the blockade of Cadiz. It was Wellington's purpose to have followed him there with 40,000 men, while Lord William Bentinck created a diversion in his favour by landing in Catalonia with 10,000 British from Sicily and 6,000 natives of Majorca enrolled and maintained at British charges. The idea, however, had to be abandoned, because of the neglect of the Spanish officers to repair the defensive works of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and to convey into these places the provisions which, seven weeks previously, Wellington had placed in their hands.* Marmont having advanced as far as Sabugal, Wellington was obliged to move northward to protect the fortresses; when Marmont retired before him, General Hill was sent out to remove the bridge of boats at Almaraz, the only remaining effective communication between the south of Spain and the frontier of Portugal. This piece of work was well accomplished on 18th May, the garrisons being surprised, the forts defending the bridge being taken by assault, and eighteen guns captured. Lord Wellington, therefore, feeling his right secure from attack, directed his efforts to a forward movement into Castile, endeavouring to bring Marmont to a general action before he should be reinforced after harvest. "We have a better chance of success now than we have ever had," he wrote to Lord Liverpool, although he added—"with all these prospects I cannot reflect without shuddering upon the probability that we shall be distressed, nor upon the consequence which may result from our wanting money in the interior of Spain." †

ANN. 1812.

Destruction of the bridge at Almaraz.

Before following the allied forces in the forward movement which was to prove the turning-point of the whole Peninsular campaign, it is necessary to recapitulate once more the strength and position of the forces on either side.

At the beginning of June, Wellington had at his disposal an army more numerous and effective than at any previous

Position and strength of the armies.

* *Despatches*, ix. 57, 173. † *Ibid.*, ix. 177.

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Æt. 43. period of his service. Under his immediate command were 75,328 Allies of all ranks (including 3,500 Spaniards under Carlos de España), of which 5,533 were cavalry, and 59 guns; but of this number no less than 16,958 *rank and file* were returned as sick on 11th July. Making allowance, therefore, for sick officers and non-commissioned officers, the effectives present on that day could not be reckoned at more than 56,000.* General Hill's force in Estremadura on the same date consisted of 25,146, sick included. Of these 2,574 were cavalry, 14,192 were Portuguese infantry, and he had 24 guns. Hill had destroyed the bridge at Almaraz, but was in communication with his chief by the bridge at Alcantara, which Wellington had caused to be repaired.

Besides these troops, there was a British garrison of 6,000 in Cadiz; and Bentinck, having sailed from Sicily with 10,000 men, was expected daily to land in Catalonia or Valencia. Silveira's Portuguese militia, also, lay in Tras-os-monte, threatening Marmont's right flank and communications.

Of the number of Spanish troops in the field it is impossible to give an estimate, so constantly did it fluctuate, nor could any reliance be placed on them under their own Generals, further than that their presence kept the enemy occupied. Castaños was to undertake the siege of Astorga in Leon; while further north, in Asturias, the 7th Spanish army was to keep Caffarelli employed. In the south, Ballasteros might be relied on for a while to detain Soult; while the army of Murcia, co-operating with Bentinck's expedition, occupied the attention of Suchet.

The official general state of the French armies in the Peninsula on 15th May, 1812, show that the army of the South, under Soult, comprised 64,360 of all arms and ranks; the army of Portugal, under Marmont, 69,037; the army of the Centre, under the King and Jourdan, 19,916; the army of the North, under Souham, 53,276; while the armies of

* Official return, *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 61.

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the Ebro, Aragon, and Catalonia, commanded by Souchet, amounted to 74,851, making a grand total of 281,440 French troops, to which may be added, for what they were worth, 40,707 Spanish troops in the service of King Joseph. Twelve thousand men were on their march from France to reinforce Marmont, but not many more could be expected from that quarter, because, on 9th May, the Emperor had marched at the head of 600,000 troops to invade Russia. ANN. 1812.

Although Lord Wellington knew that Spain was held against his advance by forces vastly superior to those of the Allies, yet he felt confident in his power to deal singly with any one of the armies opposed to him. He was deceived, however, in regard to their actual strength, which he greatly underrated until, when on the point of crossing the Agueda, he learnt the truth from certain intercepted papers.* Having requested the Spanish General Villemur to strengthen General Hill against probable movements by Soult,† and having replenished the magazines at Elvas, Badajos, Ciudad Rodrigo, and Almeida,‡ the Commander of the Forces ordered a general advance, and the army crossed the Agueda on 13th June in three columns, the Spanish troops of Don Carlos forming a fourth. The enemy fell back before them till, on the 16th, they arrived on the brook Valmusa, about six miles from Salamanca. That night Marmont evacuated the town, leaving a garrison of 800 in three forts constructed on the ruins of convents and colleges. These forts covered by their fire the bridge over the Tormes; but the Allies, crossing by two fords in the neighbourhood, entered Salamanca on the 17th, amid the tumultuous rejoicing of the inhabitants. They crowded round the columns with frantic shouts of *viva!* The women embraced the soldiers, even Wellington, whom they

Lord Wellington advances into Castile.

The Allies enter Salamanca.

* "I did not calculate that the enemy's army of Portugal was so strong when I determined on this expedition, and I had certainly reason to believe that Marshal Marmont would not evacuate the Asturias" (*Despatches*, ix. 243. See also pp. 221, 232, 239).

† *Despatches*, ix. 221.

‡ *Ibid.*, 207, 219.

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Æt. 43. nearly pulled off his horse as he sat writing orders on his sabretasche.* Good reason, indeed, had they to rejoice at their deliverance from the French, for, of all the towns in Spain, none had suffered more grievously than this famous seat of learning. Of twenty-five convents thirteen lay in ruins, and of twenty-five colleges only three remained standing.

Reduction of the forts.

Wellington had miscalculated the importance and strength of the forts. He had been informed vaguely that some convents had been strengthened; but the French engineers had been at work on them for three years, and it was found necessary to undertake their reduction in regular form. Ammunition ran out before the breaches were practicable; Major-General Bowes† and a number of others lost their lives in an attempt at escalade on the 23rd. Marmont had moved up to the relief of his garrison on the 20th, but Wellington received timely notice of his approach, and the French Marshal, having reconnoitred the position of the Allies, declined the attack, and fell back on the 23rd to Aldea Rubia, commanding the ford of Huerta on the Tormes.

Ammunition and siege material having been brought up on the 26th, the attack on the forts was renewed; two of them were stormed by detachments of the 6th Division on the 27th, and the third capitulated. The garrisons to the number of 700 were made prisoners, 30 guns and a great store of provisions and ammunition were taken, and the passage of the Tormes secured to the victors. Marmont, who had intended to offer battle on the 28th, as soon as the forts had fallen retired towards the Douro, anxiously looking for reinforcements from General Caffarelli.‡ Wellington has been blamed for having allowed him to do so,

Marmont resumes his retreat.

* *Tomkinson.*

† General Bowes went forward with the storming party of his brigade and was wounded. He went to the rear to have his wound dressed, but returning a second time to the attack, was killed.

‡ See Marmont's despatch, 31st July, *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 77.

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seeing that he had a good opportunity of attacking him between 20th and 22nd June; but as long as the guns of the forts commanded the bridge, the passage of the Tormes, in the event of failure in a general action, would have been attended with much danger, and he wisely decided to await attack in the strong position he held.* Nevertheless, in reaching the Douro, Marmont greatly improved his position. The possession of bridges strongly defended secured his retreat, while the general bend of the river enabled him to threaten the flanks of the Allies as they followed him. Wellington, therefore, maintained an attitude of observation, confident that the ever-recurring difficulty of subsistence would force his adversary either to evacuate southern Castile altogether or return to give him battle. Affairs took exactly the course he anticipated. Marmont having received reinforcements, and increased his cavalry by dismounting his infantry officers, whereby he obtained 700 horses, skilfully manœuvred, but in vain, to draw the Allies after him in his feigned retreat behind the Douro. The movements of the two armies during the first three weeks of July were of that description which is the glory of the tactician, but the despair of the historian. There was occasional sharp fighting—an affair on the 2nd, when Sir Stapleton Cotton's cavalry came up with the French rear-guard at Rueda, and drove them across the Douro; another, of more importance, on the 18th at Castrejon, when two British divisions and Cotton's cavalry had to retire through Torrecilla de la Orden upon the Guareña before the main body of the French. On the same day the enemy were repulsed in an attempt to turn the left of Wellington's position on the Guareña. ANN. 1812.

At the very moment when Marmont, having received some reinforcements from the North, and having been informed by Jourdan that he was not to expect help from the army of the Centre, assumed a bolder front, the British commander found himself on the very verge of paralysis for want of

* *Despatches*, ix. 254.

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Æt. 43. money, the pay of both officers and men being many months in arrear.

"I have never been in such distress as at the present, and some serious misfortune must happen if the Government do not attend seriously to the subject and adopt some measures to supply us regularly with money." *

This was bad enough, but his concern was even greater when news arrived that Lord William Bentinck, instead of landing on the east coast of Spain, had altered his destination to Italy. Wellington had delayed his advance into Castile until he had intelligence of Bentinck's departure from Sicily; the whole operations of the Allies had been planned to hinge on the diversion he should cause in Valencia, and now—

"Lord William's decision is fatal to the campaign, at least at present. If he should land *anywhere* in Italy, he will, as usual, be obliged to re-embark; and we shall have lost a golden opportunity here." †

Wellington decides on retreat.

Wellington, hitherto desirous to give his adversary battle, was now chiefly concerned to secure his own retreat into Portugal. Bitterly disappointed in the abandonment of Bentinck's diversion, he viewed the King's approach with the army of the Centre as putting an end to the campaign of 1812. Hearing that General Clausel had arrived at Pollos with the cavalry and artillery of the army of the North, he decided on retiring to Ciudad Rodrigo with all the speed that Marmont would permit him.‡

But Marmont's new-born eagerness seemed to forbid the avoidance of battle. On the 15th and 16th July he moved suddenly forward upon Toro and made a feint of crossing the Douro; Wellington conformed on the night of the 16th by concentrating his centre and left upon Canizal; nevertheless he had allowed his left to be turned, and the enemy had the shorter road open to Salamanca and the

* 15th July, *Despatches*, ix. 290. † *Ibid.*, ix. 289. ‡ *Ibid.*, 301.

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British communication. The two armies were now facing each other on fronts parallel with the lines connecting them with their bases, a position which made the contingency of defeat a far more serious consideration to each than when the front of both lay across its line of communications. Marmont was far too cautious to risk an attack by Wellington which might throw him off his communications and drive him into the hungry region of Tras-os-montes. Having by his movement on Toro forced the British commander to change his front to his left, he retired through Toro on the 17th, crossed the Douro higher up at Pollos and Tordesillas, and concentrated upon Nava del Rey, threatening the British right on the Trabancos. This swift change from a turning movement on the British left to one upon their right was an exceedingly skilful manœuvre, and very nearly successful. Wellington, however, at daybreak on the 18th managed to withdraw his right upon the Guareña, where it joined the rest of his army, and successfully resisted the French in their attempt to cross that river. The two armies moved in parallel lines, often within musket-shot of each other, the regularity of the parade being interrupted from time to time by a battery opening fire on either side. The weather was unusually cold for the time of year, a bitter wind sweeping down from the Sierra Estrella. Wellington used afterwards to declare that he never suffered so much from cold in any of his campaigns as during these anxious days.* ANN. 1812.

On 19th July both armies occupied positions on the plain of Vallesa, and Wellington prepared for the battle which he believed to be inevitable next day.† Marmont, however, was determined not to allow him the choice of ground, but resolved to take advantage of the superiority which the French army always claimed in manœuvring.

"This class of operations," he wrote to King Joseph, "is the only one to adopt with the English, who display peculiar talent

* *Stanhope*, 51. † *Despatches*, ix. 297.

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Æt. 48. in taking up positions, which it is necessary to thwart as much as possible by preventing them establishing themselves before giving them battle." *

Therefore at daylight on the 20th the French were seen to be in movement again to their left along the heights of the Guareña, and once more the Allies marched abreast of them. Marmont, however, kept his lead, crossed the Guareña at Cantalapiedra, and encamped that night at Babilafuente and Villoruela, covering the ford of Huerta on the Tormes. Wellington, seeing he was outflanked and outmanœuvred, bivouacked at Cabeza Vellosa, with a corps of observation on the Tormes at Aldea Lengua.

"I have determined," he wrote to the Secretary of State next day, "to cross the Tormes if the enemy should; to cover Salamanca as long as I can; and, above all, not to give up our communication with Ciudad Rodrigo; and not to fight an action, unless under very advantageous circumstances, or it should become absolutely necessary."

The French cross the Tormes.

On the afternoon of the 21st the French crossed the Tormes between Huerta and Alba, and, always moving by their left, threatened the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. A little later, Wellington, crossing by the bridge and fords of Salamanca, took up a position with his left resting on the Tormes, a couple of miles above Salamanca, and his right just short of two steep isolated hills called Dos Aripeles. It was late at night, and a fearful thunderstorm raged with torrents of rain. The importance of the Aripeles to the position of the Allies was not seen till the morning of the 22nd broke, still and clear, with delicious freshness after the storm. Then the mistake was partly rectified by the seizure of the nearer Aripele; for the further one a race took place between detachments from both armies, which was won by the

* *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 73.

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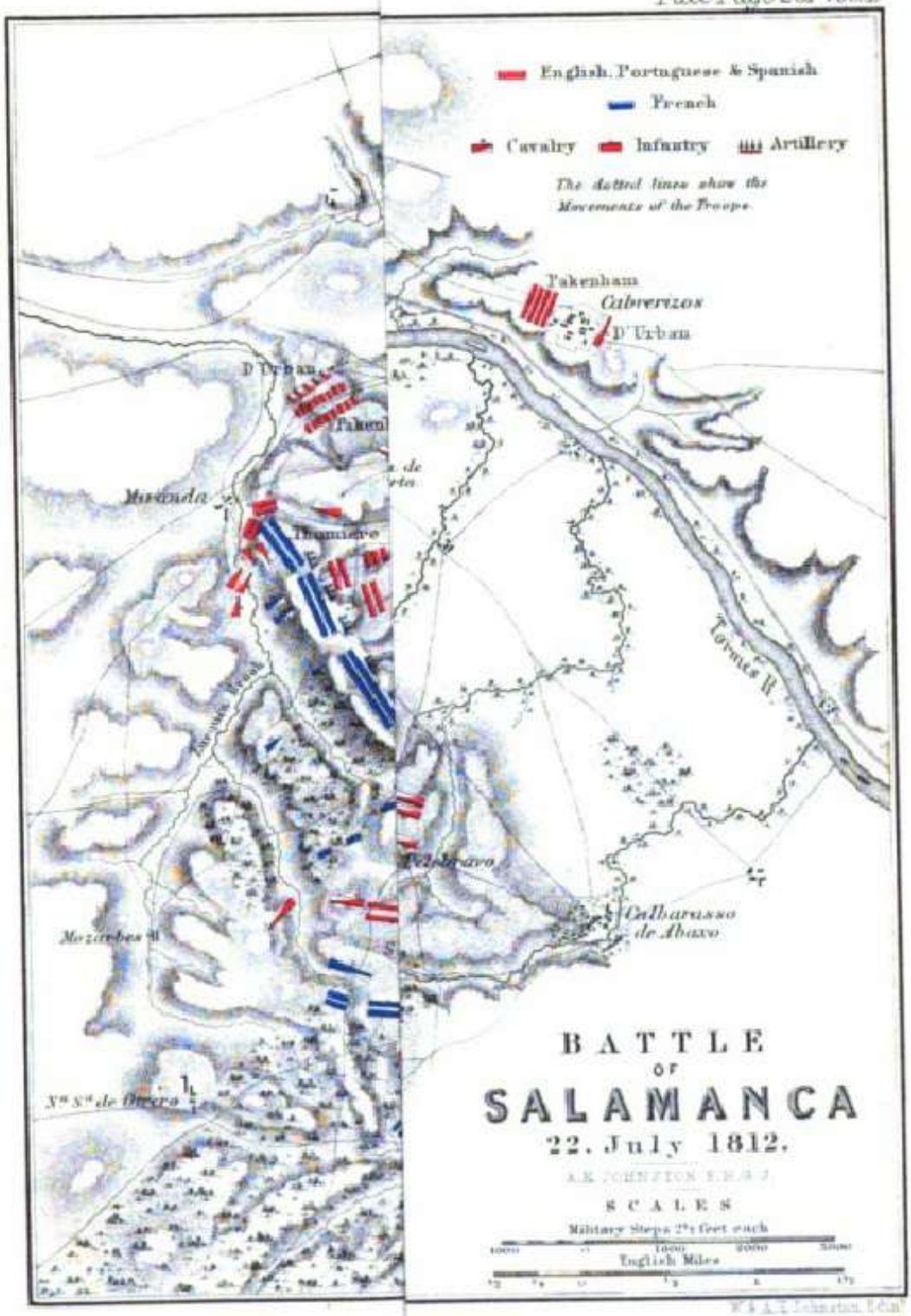

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French, greatly to the detriment of their adversary, for the height commanded the line which must have been taken by the Allies had the fortune of the day gone against them. ANN. 1812.

Battle of Salamanca.

Nearer than the Aripeles to the centre of the Allies was a hill called Nostra Señora de la Peña, to possess which the light troops of the 7th Division and the 4th Caçadores disputed with the enemy, both sides remaining upon it till the close of the action. The forenoon passed in suspense, Marmont's design not being apparent—indeed he had not fully decided whether to await or to give battle.* Two of his divisions only were in position on Calvarasa de Arriba, the rest were moving up through the forest from Babila Fuente. Wellington's object was to secure his retreat, which he intended to resume as soon as darkness should render it safe to attempt it. His baggage was already some hours on the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Early in the day he extended his right *en potence* † to the village of Arapiles, which he occupied with the 4th Division, and placed the 3rd Division at Aldea Tejeda, while between these two divisions Bradford's Portuguese Brigade and the Spaniards of Don Carlos held Las Torres.

Flank movement of Marmont.

Shortly after midday Wellington descended the Arapile, and entered a farmyard where some breakfast had been prepared for him and his staff. The shot was falling so fast around that the viands had to be moved behind the buildings, Lord Wellington "stumping about, munching," and taking continual peeps through his glass at the enemy. Presently an aide-de-camp brought word that an important movement was taking place in the French position. Wellington took another peep. "By God!" he exclaimed with his mouth full, "that'll do!" ‡ Mounting in haste, he galloped back to his post of observation on the Arapile, and eagerly examined

* Marmont to the King of Spain, 25th July, *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 73.

† *En potence:* like the arm of a gallows—at right angles.

‡ *Greville*, 2nd series, ii. 39.

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Æt. 43. the enemy. Closing his spy-glass with a snap, and turning to his Spanish *attaché*, he exclaimed—

"Mon cher Alava, Marmont est perdu!"

The French Marshal, perceiving that the Allies had no intention of attacking him, had turned his attention to securing command of the line of their retreat. Opening a cannonade from fifty guns, he moved General Thomière's division to seize the height of Miranda, nearly two miles on his left. Wellington's practised eye detected the serious error of this evolution, which separated the left wing of the French from their centre.

His opportunity had come.*

He formed Leith's 5th Division on the right of the 4th, thus uniting them in line of battle with Bradford's Portuguese, while he held the 6th and 7th Divisions in reserve. Then he dashed off to the 3rd Division, commanded by his brother-in-law Pakenham.

"Ned," said he, pointing to Thomières' columns moving along the heights, "d'ye see those fellows on the hill? Throw your division into column; at them! and drive them to the devil."

The perspective of a battlefield is a difficult subject to present on a printed page. Space and time—elements of supreme moment to a commander in the field—are hard to realise as the eye travels from paragraph to paragraph; sometimes a subordinate incident illustrates them better than elaborate description. Having sent Pakenham to outflank Thomières, Wellington returned at speed to his position

* "Marmont ought to have given me a *pont d'or*, and he would have made a handsome operation of it. But instead of that, after manœuvring all morning in the usual French style, nobody knew with what object, he at last pressed on my right in such a manner, at the same time without engaging, that he would have either carried our Arapiles, or he would have confined us entirely to our position. This was not to be endured, and we fell upon him, turning his left flank: and I never saw an army receive such a beating" (private letter from Lord Wellington to General Graham, who had returned to England on sick leave, *Despatches*, ix. 309).

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on the Arapile. His battle-front was ready, but Marmont's attack was still two miles distant. ANN. 1812.

"Watch the French through your glass, Fitzroy," he said to his nephew and aide-de-camp Somerset.* "I am going to take a rest: when they reach that copse, near the gap in the hills, wake me."

Then he lay down in his cloak on the heath, among the sweet gum-cistus flowers, and was fast asleep in a minute.

They wakened him between three and four; the French were within striking range; he advanced the 4th and 5th Divisions to the attack, with the Portuguese and Cotton's cavalry, strongly supported on the left by the 1st and Light Divisions. At the same moment Pack's brigade assailed the French Arapile, where Marmont and his staff sat only half a cannon-shot distant from the British commander. Marmont, although Pakenham's movement was still hidden from his view, at once sent orders to recall Thomières to his former position and to hasten the march of his reserve divisions, which were coming up through the forest. The onslaught in front he received with a destructive fire from his centre, strongly posted on the slopes of Calvarasa. Not till five o'clock, when the head of Pakenham's column came in view and he perceived the 3rd Division deploy as a wall across his left flank, did Marmont realise the awful peril his rash movement had incurred. Spurring furiously to the point of danger, he was struck by the fragments of a shell, which broke his arm and tore open his side. It was in mercy that he was spared the sight of the shattering which Pakenham inflicted on Thomières' columns, rolling them up and driving them before him upon the 4th and 5th Divisions and Bradford's brigade, who by this time were driving their opponents from height to height. Upon the French, thus penned between two foes, swept down Sir Stapleton Cotton's cavalry, completing their disastrous rout and utterly destroying all semblance of their formation. Cotton himself was wounded,

Pakenham's flank attack.

* Afterwards Lord Raglan.

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Æt. 43. and General le Marchant killed, yet the squadrons rode on till they came upon a fresh column still in good order. This also they broke and dispersed, capturing five guns. General Bonet, who succeeded to Marmont's command, fell wounded, Thomières was killed, and now upon Clausel, newly arrived from the rear, devolved the conduct of the fight. The French right, continually reinforced by troops arriving from the rear, still fought stubbornly; and Clausel, not content with covering a retreat, and encouraged by a gleam of success which shone on the eagles of the right, ably and gallantly strove to restore the fortune of the day. The French Arapile was still strongly held, showing what the British had missed in not occupying it overnight. Pack's Portuguese met with a severe handling in attempting to carry it, and immediately afterwards the 4th Division, wearied with long fighting, sustained a serious reverse from one of Clausel's fresh columns. Their General, the Hon. Lowry Cole,* was disabled by a wound. Driven off the southern ridge which they had gained, they endured a damaging charge from Boyer's dragoons; while on their right the first line of the 5th Division yielded to the stress of General Brennier's attack. General Leith, commanding the 5th Division, fell wounded; to him succeeded the veteran Beresford, who had scarcely brought up Spry's Portuguese brigade from the second line when he, too, was struck down and borne off the field.

The combat in the amphitheatre between the northern and southern ridges was a terrible one; officers and men were falling fast on both sides; so deadly was the fire, so nearly matched were British and French in courage and endurance, that it seemed as if none would survive to claim supremacy. Victory waited to declare for that commander who could bring up the stronger reserve. Wellington's faculty of being present where his presence was most necessary was never more conspicuous than at this crisis. Ordering

* Second son of the first Earl of Enniskillen.

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up the 6th Division, he launched it upon the fray: the scale turned slowly; foot by foot Clausel's grenadiers were forced back across the flat, up the hill beyond, till the British cheers rang out once more from the southern height. ANN. 1812.

The French divisions of Foy and Maucune stood firm, covering the disordered retreat of the main army. Foy, on the right, held the road to the fords at Huerta, Maucune that to Alba de Tormes; but Wellington still had something in hand. He brought up the Light Division, and rode with it while it advanced in two lines against Foy, supported by the 1st Division and two brigades of the 4th Division in battalion columns, and followed by the 7th Division and Don Carlos's Spaniards in reserve. It was now dusk. Foy retired for three miles by alternate wings, maintaining a heavy fire of artillery and small arms, until in the darkness he found safety in the dense forest. With steadiness not less admirable than his comrade Foy's, Maucune, on his left, conducted his retreat towards Alba before the 6th Division, supported by the 3rd and 5th, until the shroud of night and the friendly forest saved him also from pursuit. Still Wellington pressed on in the moonlight at the head of his Light Division, confident that, the passage at Alba de Tormes being barred by the Spanish garrison, he would inflict a crowning blow on the fugitives at the fords. Retreat of the French.

He was deceived. Don Carlos had disobeyed him, having in the morning withdrawn the garrison of Alba de Tormes, and thus left the bridge free for the passage of the enemy.

"On the morning of the battle of Salamanca I received a message from Don Carlos de España, asking if he might withdraw the garrison from the Castle at Alba de Tormes which commanded the bridge over the Tormes at that town. I answered 'By no means,' because I knew if the French beat us they would follow us and that the garrison would have no difficulty in getting away along the bank of the river towards the south; whereas in the event of our beating them, the garrison at Alba would prevent

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Æt. 43. their retreat by that bridge, and cause them great loss. Considering, therefore, that passage as secured, I directed our march upon the Tormes after the victory to some fords, where I supposed the French would chiefly betake themselves for retreat, and which were considerably to the north of Alba. I was surprised, however, when I found that the French had retreated through Alba unopposed. It turned out that Don Carlos had actually withdrawn the garrison from Alba first, and asked leave afterwards. When refused he probably thought it too late to countermand them, and, rather than own his shameful conduct, said nothing more about it. This enabled the French to bring off about 9,000 or 10,000 men equipped, etc., which we must have captured if the garrison had been left at Alba." *

On arriving at the fords of Huerta, therefore, Wellington found no enemy; Foy had drawn off in the direction of Alba, where he and Maucune, and the main body of the French army, made good their escape across the Tormes to Peñeranda.

The pursuit was renewed next day, and continued as far as the Adaja, fully sixty miles east of the battlefield. Doubtless Wellington, whose left wing was comparatively fresh, might have made it more effective had he been without anxiety for his communications; moreover, his commissariat had to be brought back from the direction of Ciudad Rodrigo, whither it had been sent on the morning of the battle. However, at midday on the 23rd, the enemy's rear-guard was overtaken at the village of La Serna, by the heavy dragoons of the King's German Legion under General Bock, which gave occasion for what the French General Foy declared was the boldest charge of cavalry in the whole war. The French cavalry made off, leaving three battalions of infantry to their fate. These were strongly posted in squares; the Hanoverian cavalry charged them, broke the squares, and took the whole of them prisoners.

Fine charge of the German cavalry.

Clausel was now reinforced by the cavalry and artillery of

* *De Ros MS.*

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the army of the North, who covered his disorderly retreat to the Douro. The great victory of Salamanca was shorn of some of the fruits which would have been reaped by the Allies had Don Carlos not withdrawn the garrison of Alba de Tormes on the morning of the 22nd; as it was they took 11 guns, 2 eagles, 6 stand of colours, and 7,000 prisoners, including one General and 136 officers of inferior rank. Their own losses were reckoned at 41 officers and 658 soldiers killed, 253 officers and 4273 soldiers wounded and missing.* One British General, Le Marchant, was killed, and Generals Beresford, Cole, Leith, Alten, and Stapleton Cotton wounded, the last-named by a Portuguese sentry, whose challenge Cotton disregarded when returning from the ford at Huerta in the dark. Wellington himself, who as usual exposed himself in the hottest of the field, when riding with the 43rd Regiment in the pursuit, was struck in the thigh by a musket-ball, which happily had expended its force by passing through his holster. ANN. 1812.

Of the French Generals, Ferey, Thomières, and Desgraviers perished; Marmont, Bonet, Maine, and Clausel were wounded. Marmont admitted a loss of 6,000 of his troops, besides prisoners.†

There was no longer any question of the quality of the allied army or the capacity of its General. Wellington's success was acknowledged by the Prince Regent on behalf of his own country in his advancement to the rank of marquess—by the Spanish Cortes on behalf of theirs in his admission to the sacred order of the *Toison d'Or*. Wellington made marquis.

From the heart of Russia Napoleon launched his wrath against Marmont the unlucky, repeating the unjust accusa- Napoleon's anger against Marmont.

* *Despatches*, ix. 309. The 61st Regiment paraded in the morning with 27 officers and 420 soldiers. In the evening only 3 officers and 78 men were present; 24 officers and 342 soldiers were killed or wounded. It is worth reflecting whether our nerves to-day are strong enough to endure an announcement to similar effect in the morning papers. It were well, in such an event, that Parliament should *not* be in session.

† Marmont's despatch to the Duc de Feltre, 31st July, 1812.

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Æt. 43. tion which King Joseph had made against him to the Emperor of having forced a battle in order to reap his laurels before Joseph and Jourdan should arrive to share them. Now Jourdan, as we know, had warned Marmont not to rely on support or reinforcements from the army of the Centre; this did not serve in the least to mitigate the Emperor's cruel reproaches.

The Emperor Napoleon to the Duc de Feltre.

"Ghiart, 2nd September, 1812.

"I have received the report of the Duke of Ragusa (Marmont) upon the battle of the 22nd. It is impossible to imagine anything more senseless: it contains more rubbish (*fatras*) and more wheelwork (*rouages*) than a clock, and not a word to explain the real state of affairs. . . . Wait till the Duke of Ragusa arrives and is recovered from his wound. You will then request him to reply categorically to these questions. Why did he give battle without orders from his Commander-in-chief? Why did he not take orders as to the part he was to follow, subject to the general system of operations in Spain? Here we have *the crime of insubordination*, which is the cause of all our misfortune in this affair."

Napoleon, who never pardoned want of success, was less indulgent even than usual, when so many circumstances combined in favour of the conquest of Spain. He could feel no doubt that had he himself been on the spot victory would have been restored to the arms of France by his one supreme, undisputed authority.

The occasion had been very critical for the Allies. The United States had declared war against Great Britain on 18th June, interfering seriously with the concentration of her energy on the struggle in the Peninsula, and Wellington's whole scheme in that struggle had been compromised by the miscarriage of Bentinck's expedition from Sicily. Happily for Wellington—happily for the fortunes of the Allies—Napoleon was so far away that it took six weeks for the swiftest couriers

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to travel to and from his armies in Spain; while, among his lieutenants, the relations were becoming daily more critical. Four days before the battle of Salamanca, King Joseph had written to the Minister of War in Paris:— ANN. 1812.

"If the Emperor cannot find means to compel the Generals of the armies of the North, of Aragon, and of the South to obey me, Spain is lost, and the French army with it. . . . I have already demanded, and I now repeat the demand, because the situation becomes daily more serious, that those Generals who have no thought for anything except their provinces, and show themselves indifferent to combinations, may be deprived of all command as an example to their successors; that they may receive no instructions except from me; or else that the Emperor shall no longer condemn me to be an impotent witness of the dishonour of his arms and the loss of this country." *

After the battle, the King, instead of moving a few hours' march to support the beaten army of Portugal at Arevalo with his corps of 14,000 men and 20 guns, fell back to the Guadarama, and desired Clausel to form a junction with him at Madrid. But Clausel was in no condition to obey him. The army of Portugal was disorganised by defeat, and in dire straits for subsistence. To restore anything like discipline harsh measures had to be employed; upwards of fifty of Clausel's soldiers were executed.† He replied to the King that, in order to save the magazines at Valladolid, and form communications with the army of the North, he must cross the Douro, and urged instead that the King should form a junction with the army of Portugal; but Joseph turned a deaf ear to this proposal. Clausel sent his right wing over the Douro on the 26th, and followed with the left on the 29th, from which it may be inferred that the pursuit was not very brisk. Clausel, by his management of a beaten army in retreat, earned Wellington's cordial admiration. Movements of the army of the Centre.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 72. † *Ibid.*, xiv. 104.

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Æt. 43. "During the five weeks of this retreat, he held every position till turned, and then drew off in splendid order." *

The Allies enter Valladolid.

Following Clausel with as much diligence as the state of their commissariat would allow, the Allies entered Valladolid on 30th July, capturing 17 guns, a quantity of stores, and 800 sick and wounded French. Next day, Tordesillas surrendered to 8,000 Galicians, whom Wellington had brought down from the north; Clausel continued his retreat to Burgos, which rendered complete the separation of the armies of the North and the Centre.

They advance upon Madrid.

Lord Wellington was now free to turn his attention to the army of the Centre, which, on 1st August, was in full retreat on Madrid. Leaving General Clinton at Cuellar with 8,000 men to watch Marmont, besides the Galicians and a couple of thousand Partidas, he changed foxes, to use a hunting metaphor, and marched with 30,000 troops on the tracks of King Joseph. That unfortunate monarch, having 20,000 troops in his immediate command, might have made a formidable stand in the passes of the Sierra de Guadarama; but such was far from his intention.

Soult, instead of complying with the King's commands to evacuate Andalusia and move into communication with him at Toledo, had remonstrated vigorously, and suggested instead that the King should evacuate Madrid and concentrate all his armies in Andalusia. "Qu' importe à votre Majesté de conserver Madrid si elle perd la royaume?" † Suchet, on the other hand, urged the King to make a French Portugal of Catalonia, and draw behind the Ebro all the troops with eagles.

King Joseph leaves Madrid.

The Allies passed through the Guadarama on 10th August without meeting any opposition. The King, repeating his orders to Soult to evacuate Andalusia, left Madrid with his whole court—an enormous convoy of 20,000 non-combatants, and 2,000 or 3,000 carriages—and, passing south with the disordered array by Valdemoro, crossed the Tagus

* *De Ros MS.* † *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 98.

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at Aranjuez. No satisfactory explanation has been offered for Wellington's reasons in refraining from capturing this convoy, as he might easily have done. It has been supposed that the presence of so many women and children in the flying throng induced him to hold his hand; but it is curious that he does not allude to the circumstance in his despatches. ANN. 1812.

When King Joseph arrived on the south side of the Tagus he received Soult's refusal to move from Andalusia to meet him at Toledo; he also heard from Suchet, announcing the landing of 5,000 British and 8,000 Spaniards under General Maitland at Alicante; he therefore changed his course and hurried on towards Valencia, directing Soult to move thither also.

Wellington refrained from following the King. Gratified by hearing that at last the Sicilian expedition had landed, although it was far inferior in number and quality to that originally intended, he turned aside from his pursuit in order to enter Madrid, for besides immense military stores contained in the Retiro—no inconsiderable prize—the moral effect of the appearance of the victorious Allies in the streets of the capital was one not to be under-valued. The entry took place on the 12th August amid scenes of affecting emotion. The inhabitants had suffered too long and too sorely under the invader to emulate the tumultuous exultation of the people of Salamanca, but they wept and knelt and blessed their deliverers aloud. The Allies enter Madrid.

The French garrison of 2,000 left in the Retiro capitulated on the 13th, and were sent as prisoners to Portugal. Unhappily, their escort consisted of Portuguese troops, and these, yielding to the rancorous hatred of race, were false to their trust, maltreating, robbing, and even murdering, many of their prisoners. Twenty thousand stand of arms, one hundred and eighty guns, and two eagles were delivered with the Retiro into the hands of the conquerors.

Soult, yielding tardy obedience to the King, raised the

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Dissension between King Joseph and Soult.

siege of Cadiz on 25th August, although at the very moment that Joseph was expressing doubts to the Emperor of Soult's fidelity to the cause of France, and demanding his imprisonment, Soult was warning him, with equal injustice, that the King was about to sacrifice French interests by separately treating for the peaceful possession of Spain by himself. Soult even went so far as to cause the letters of the King, his military superior, to be intercepted and opened, a proceeding which speedily brought the relations between these two commanders to a crisis. Napoleon treated the complaints of both of them with impatience. Soult's representations, he said, had reached him already through another channel; he could not be expected "to pay attention to such trivialities at a moment when, at the head of 500,000 men, he was engaged in tremendous operations."* As for the King's accusation of Soult, Soult was *la seule tête militaire qu'il eût en Espagne*, and could not be removed without compromising the army.

Appointment of a Judge-Advocate-General.

During the autumn of 1812 Wellington, who had frequently complained of the enormous labour thrown upon him by the personal direction of judicial proceedings by court-martial, received timely assistance and relief by the appointment of Mr. S. Larpent as Judge-Advocate-General. The extent of this relief may be estimated from some passages in Larpent's interesting journal.

February 7, 1813.—"I really scarcely know where to turn, and my fingers are quite fatigued, as well as my brains, with the arrangements and difficulties as to witnesses, etc. I sent out seventeen letters yesterday; and to-day I have one case of thirteen prisoners who have been committing every sort of outrage on their march here. Lord Wellington . . . yesterday . . . said, 'If your friends knew what was going on here, they would think you had no sinecure. And how do you suppose I was plagued when I had to do it nearly all myself?'"†

* Report by Colonel Desprez to the King of Spain. † *Larpent*, i. 88.

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ANN. 1812.

Lord Wellington's armorial bearings.

It is amusing to read a correspondence at this period between the Secretary of State and Lord Wellington. Lord Wellesley, it seems, had suggested that the splendour of his brother's success should be marked by the addition of a French eagle to his arms as an honourable augmentation. Lord Bathurst hesitated at first, because Marlborough's services had not been acknowledged in a similar way. Finally, he told Wellington, he rejected the idea of the eagle because "many have had eagles given them, our friend John Villiers among the rest" (the allusion is to the third Earl of Clarendon), and submitted instead to the Prince Regent a proposal that the Union Jack should be borne by Lord Wellington on an escutcheon of pretence, which was approved. Wellington's acknowledgment is brief; probably the archaic symbolism of heraldry at no time would occupy his thoughts very fully, least of all in presence of five French armies. "I shall receive with gratitude any honour which His Royal Highness may think proper to confer upon me; but the addition proposed to my arms is the last which would have occurred to me. It carries with it an appearance of ostentation, of which I hope I am not guilty, and it will scarcely be credited that I did not apply for it." *

Lord Wellington's position in Madrid, though it gave rapturous satisfaction to the Spaniards, failed to rouse them to the exertion necessary to the deliverance of their country.

"18th August.

"I don't expect much from the exertion of the Spaniards, notwithstanding all we have done for them. They cry *Viva!* and are very fond of us, and hate the French; but they are, in general, the most incapable of useful exertion of all the nations I have known; the most vain, and at the same time the most ignorant, especially of military affairs in their own country." †

The British commander was much embarrassed by the

* *Suppl. Despatches*, vii. 414. † *Despatches*, ix. 366.

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failure of money consignments. His soldiers had received pay only up to the middle of April—his staff to the beginning of February—it was now the end of August! * Clausel, moreover, admirably patient and industrious, had restored the efficiency of the army of Portugal with astonishing rapidity, and was concentrating on the Douro, threatening Wellington's communications. Therefore on 1st September, General Hill having moved to Aranjuez to watch Soult and co-operate with Ballasteros so far as co-operation with any Spanish General was possible, Lord Wellington marched northward on 1st September with four divisions, leaving two divisions in Madrid. He crossed the Douro on the 7th and established himself at Valladolid, Clausel falling back before him through Burgos on the 17th, where the Allies, strengthened by the junction of 12,000 Spaniards of the army of Galicia, established themselves and prepared for the siege of the castle.

Wellington marches from Madrid.

This stronghold, which contained the principal magazines of the French in the north of Spain, was held by a garrison of 2,000 under General Dubreton within three lines of *enceinte*, the outer one being of masonry, the two inner ones of earthwork. There was also the detached hornwork of San Michele, commanding the castle from the north. On the evening of 19th September the outwork was carried by assault after a murderous conflict, the garrison cutting their way out and escaping to the castle. The assailants lost 80 men killed and 334 wounded. Although encouraged by this initial success, Wellington soon found that he had undertaken something far beyond the powers of his equipment. With only three 18-pounder guns, five 24-pounder howitzers, and a very small store of ammunition, he could make no impression on the defences. On the 22nd an escalade, attempted before the place had been breached, resulted in failure. For this Lord Wellington blamed the field officer commanding

Siege of Burgos.

* The French army was even worse off, having received no pay for a whole year.

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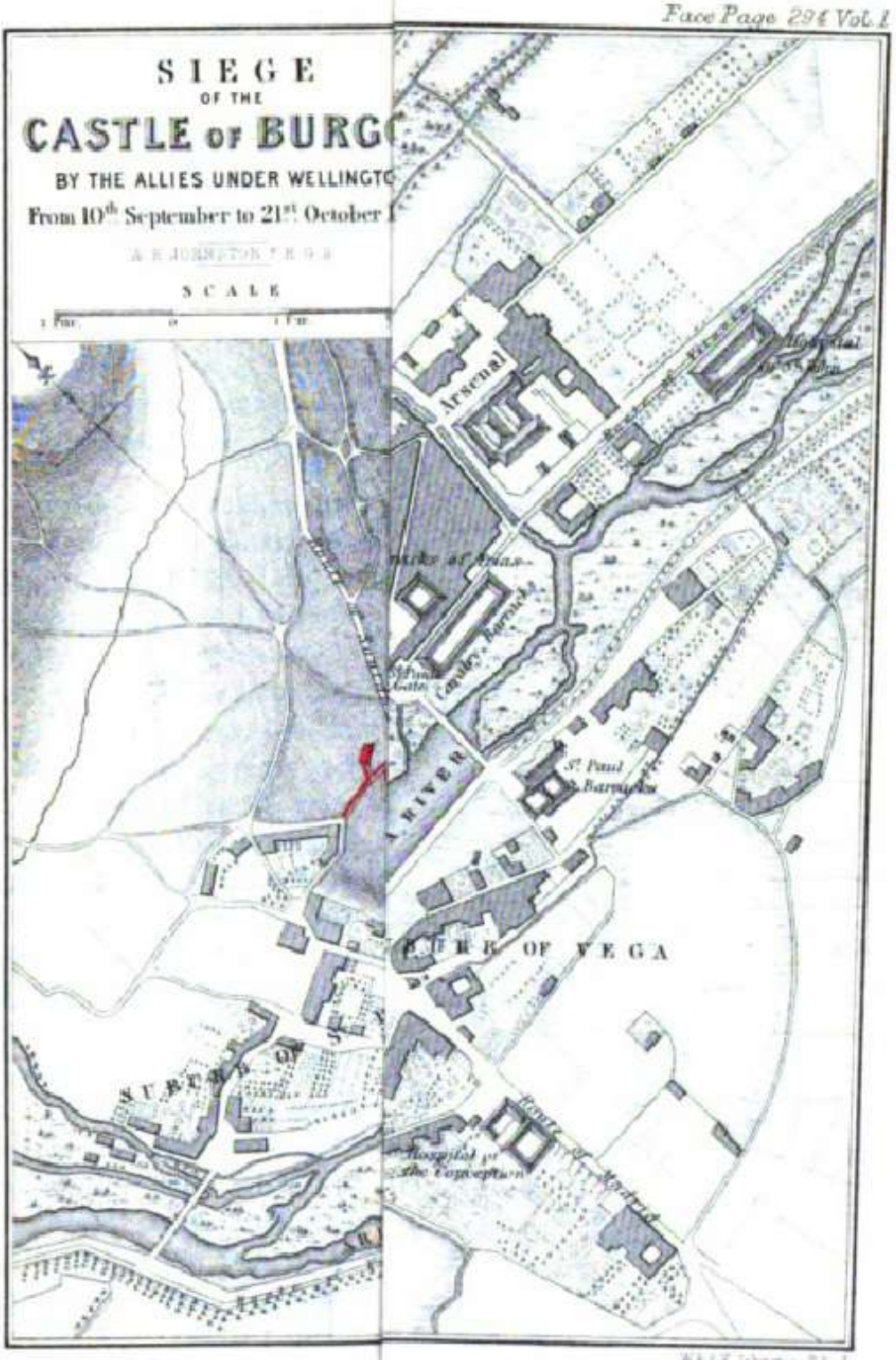

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the assault, Major Lawrie of the 79th, who was killed at the head of his party. ANN. 1812.

"He paid no attention to his orders, notwithstanding the pains I took in writing them, and in reading and explaining them to him twice over. He made none of the dispositions ordered; and, instead of regulating the attack as he ought, he rushed on as if he had been the leader of a forlorn hope, and fell. . . . He had my instructions in his pocket, and as the French got possession of his body, and were made acquainted with the plan, the attack could never be repeated. When he fell, nobody having received orders what to do, nobody could give any to the troops. I was in the trenches, however, and ordered them to withdraw." *

Work in the trenches having been resumed, a mine was pushed under the outer line of defence, and a fresh assault ordered on the 28th. The mine exploded at midnight, and a sergeant and four men forced their way through the breach it created. They were not supported as they ought to have been: the officer leading the forlorn hope missed the breach in the darkness, reported that the wall was unbroken, and the whole storming party returned to the trenches.

The moral effect of this second failure was very bad. Men and officers alike became dispirited; a dangerous degree of insubordination showed itself in certain regiments. Soon, however, a second mine was driven forward, and was fired with tremendous effect on the evening of 4th October; the breach was carried; a lodgment effected, and the arrival of much-needed stores of ammunition landed from Popham's squadron on the north coast (for Wellington now enjoyed the advantage of a supplementary base) lent an energy to the attack against the inner works of which defective means had hitherto deprived it. Nevertheless, so resourceful was the French commander Dubreton, so vigilant his garrison and so active in sorties, that although the explosion of a third mine on the 18th enabled the Guards and the Germans

* *Despatches*, ix. 566.

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Æt. 43. to storm the breaches in the second line, they could not hold them, and were driven out with loss.

"I do not know what to say of this damned place," wrote Wellington to Beresford. "Our success of yesterday evening has opened a new scene to us; but our final success is still doubtful. Luckily the French give me more time than I had a right to expect." *

Souham advances to relieve Burgos.

They did not give him time enough. The weeks had been well spent by the French Generals. Masséna had been restored to favour, and appointed to the chief command in the northern provinces; it was expected that he would hasten in person to wipe away the cloud which Wellington had cast on his arms; but age had begun to quench the veteran's ardour, and he committed the task to another. Clausel, by the skill with which he had conducted the retreat from Salamanca and by his success in repairing the evils of Marmont's defeat, had earned a claim to continue in command of the army of Portugal. The King pinned his faith upon Drouet, Count d'Erlon; but Masséna set aside both, and, superseding Clausel, commissioned General Souham to march to the relief of Burgos. The army of Portugal, reinforced with 12,000 fresh troops from France, amounted at the end of September to 35,000 effectives, and Caffarelli was at Vitoria with 8,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry. Wellington had 31,000 round Burgos, but 11,000 of these were Galicians, on which he could not rely. General Hill had occupied Toledo, and lay along the Tagus between that place and Aranjuez. Souham arrived on 3rd October to take command of the army of Portugal. Over-estimating the strength of the Allies, he delayed his advance till the 18th, driving in their outposts at Monasterio on the 19th. On the night of the 21st Wellington, with a heavy heart, raised the siege of Burgos, which had cost his army upwards of 2,000 killed and wounded, and began a retreat towards

* *Despatches*, ix. 466.

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the Douro, ordering General Hill to conform by retiring along the valley of the Tagus.

Wellington raises the siege and retreats to the Douro.

It might be supposed, from the frequency and violence with which Napier and others denounced the Cabinet for their supposed neglect of the war, that ministers were to blame for the wretchedly inadequate means with which Wellington undertook this siege. In the House of Lords Lord Wellesley vehemently accused Lord Bathurst with responsibility for its failure; but Wellington himself gave the true reason in his despatches to the Secretary of State.

"There were ample means both at Madrid and Santander for the siege of the strongest fortress. That which was wanting at both places was means of transporting ordnance and military stores. . . . The people of England, so happy as they are in every respect, so rich in resources . . . having the use of such excellent roads, will not readily believe that important results here frequently depend upon fifty or sixty mules more or less, or a few bundles of straw to feed them. . . . I could not find means of moving even one gun from Madrid." *

It is still more difficult now, when railroads run in all directions, to realise the condition of Spanish roads, of which it was remarked by a cavalry officer at the time that it was "much easier to march up an English staircase than to ascend them." † On one occasion during this retreat Wellington actually lost his army. Clinton, Stewart, and Dalhousie had been ordered to move their divisions in three columns by a certain route. Finding the rivers flooded, they feared to attempt the fords, and moved upon a certain bridge which had been assigned to the Spaniards. Consequently, when the Commander-in-chief reached the spot where he was to rejoin them, he found himself alone with his staff, several miles in advance. "What did he say?" asked Greville when Fitzroy Somerset told him this story.

* *Despatches*, ix. 566. † *Tomkinson*, 232.

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Æt. 43. "Oh, by God!" replied Somerset, "it was far too serious to say anything." *

Wellington's foxhounds.

Amid all the anxieties which pressed on him from the beginning of the siege of Burgos, Wellington yet had thoughts to spare for lighter matters. Always a keen fox-hunter, he encouraged his officers to follow the hounds which he kept during this campaign. On 14th October, writing to his Adjutant-General, the Lord Charles Stewart, who had gone home on sick leave—

"Goodman is now doing the duty of the office, poor Waters being very ill. . . . I hope we shall soon have Waters again, particularly as the hunting season is coming on apace, the hounds are on the road, and I shall want Waters for the earth stopping business, if not for that of the A.G." †

Again, on 3rd November, when he was in full retreat before Souham, and Hill was falling back before Soult, he wrote to Hill: "If you should be pressed by the enemy . . . if you should move from the Adaja, take care that all our stores and people (including my hounds at Arevalo) move off." ‡

Lord Wellington kept eight good hunters, besides seven chargers, and both stables were kept in full work. His fox-hounds, about sixteen couple, were an uneven lot, carried no head, and seldom killed a fox, owing to the difficulty Colonel Waters found in stopping the country effectively. The going was bad, light gravel and rocks alternating with wet, unrideable bottoms; but Wellington, who cared little for scientific hunting, and only wanted lots of exercise, was quite content with the character of the sport. §

Wellington appointed Spanish Generalissimo.

Before he raised the fruitless siege of Burgos, Lord Wellington was appointed by the Cortes Commander-in-chief of

* *Greville*, 2nd series, i. 137.

† *Despatches*, ix. 486. Waters was the officer who distinguished himself at the passage of the Douro in 1809.

‡ *Ibid.*, 526.

§ *Larpent*, i. 78.

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the armies of Spain—a step which, had it been taken immediately after the overthrow of Masséna, might have had a weighty influence on the war, but one which came too late to do much except add to the anxieties of Wellington and disgust of one, at least, of the Spanish Generals. Ballesteros, whose duty it was to oppose the march of Soult upon Madrid, allowed him to pass unmolested, and published a violent protest denying the power of the Government and the Cortes to appoint a foreigner Commander-in-chief without the consent of the Spanish Generals. For this act he was deprived of his command and imprisoned, the Duque del Parque replacing him at the head of the fourth army. ANN. 1812.

Wellington continued his retreat, his rear-guard having a sharp encounter with the enemy's cavalry on the 23rd October in the passage of the Hormaza. Another affair took place on the Pisuerga on the 25th, where the Allies were compelled to halt for a day, because of the difficulty of transporting the sick and wounded. The retreat was resumed, for the behaviour of the Galician troops on the Pisuerga convinced the Commander of the Forces that he must rely only on his British and Portuguese. "The Spanish troops," he wrote to his brother Henry, "have invariably manifested a disposition to engage with the enemy . . . the truth, however, ought to be known to the (Spanish) Government . . . in the affair at Villamuriel they could neither advance or retreat in order. Their movements were made *à la débandade.*" He estimated the numbers under Souham at not less than 40,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, to oppose which he had not more than 20,000 British and Portuguese and 12,600 Galicians. Owing to the misconduct of Ballasteros, Soult, with 50,000 men, was able to press on Sir Rowland Hill, who was falling back to effect a junction with the Commander-in-chief. On the 29th Wellington crossed the Douro at Tudela and Puente del Duero, blowing up the bridges behind him, forming his junction with Hill's corps on the Adaja on the 3rd, and thus, as he wrote to the Hon. C.

The Allies re-cross the Douro.

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Æt. 43. Stewart, "I have got clear, in a handsome manner, of the worst scrape I ever was in."

On reaching the Douro, Souham refrained from further pursuit, awaiting the arrival of Soult and the King with the armies of the South and the Centre, which would bring the combined French forces up to 80,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and 120 guns. On 10th November Souham established himself on the right bank of the Tormes. Two days previously the Allies, numbering, since Hill had rejoined his chief, 52,000 and 12,000 Galicians, with 70 guns, took up a strong, though extended position, reaching from San Cristoval on the right bank of the Tormes to the left bank opposite Alba, where the bridge was destroyed and a garrison placed in the castle. Here Wellington expected and desired to be attacked. The King and Jourdan were eager to gratify him, and to avenge Marmont's defeat on the very ground where it had been inflicted. Soult, however, was of other counsel. He was for crossing the Tormes seven miles above Alba, thereby threatening the flank and rear of the Allies; and the King, though suspicious of Soult's political integrity, respected his military genius and yielded to his opinion.

Soult crosses the Tormes.

Wellington suffered this crossing to take place on 14th November, nor is it easy to explain why he offered no opposition and allowed Soult to post himself strongly between Mozarves and the height of Nostra Señora de Utiero. Reconnoitring this position under cover of a cannonade, Wellington found it so strong that he fell back on his old ground about the Aripeles. Souham, finding the bridge at Alba broken, crossed the Tormes higher up, and ranged himself on Soult's flank on Señora de Utiero. Soult, who had begun fortifying Mozarves, now attempted to gain command of the road to Ciudad Rodrigo by an extension of his left similar to that executed, with the same object and with such disastrous result, by Marmont on 22nd July. Yet, in order to avoid interruption, he moved at a greater distance from the enemy, on a range of heights east of those chosen by Marmont. His

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movements were slow, for incessant rain had made the ground very heavy and swelled every rivulet into a torrent; this, and a thick fog, afforded Wellington the chance of avoiding battle, which he was now as fain to do as previously he had been to seek it; for the army before him was the strongest in numbers that was ever concentrated against him in the whole war. Under cover of the fog he moved his army in three columns across the Turguen, right round Soult's left flank, and so on without molestation to the Salmusa. During the retreat, which continued on the 16th and three following days, Lieut.-General Sir Edward Paget, who had been sent out as senior in command under Wellington, fell into the enemy's hands by a strange mishap. Commanding the central column of the army, he rode back alone to correct an interval which had occurred between the 5th and 7th Divisions; being very short-sighted, he missed his way in returning and, mistaking a detachment of French cavalry for British, was taken prisoner.

ANN. 1812.

Wellington retires past the French left.

After cannonading the Light Division which formed the rear-guard during the passage of the Huebra on the 17th, Soult desisted from pursuit and recrossed the Tormes. The Allies thereupon went in cantonments for the winter, holding a wide and scattered front. Hill's Division on the right held Plasencia and Coria, with an advanced detachment at Bejar, while the left extended as far as Lamego on Portuguese soil.

The Allies go into winter quarters.

This retreat from Burgos was the severest trial that British troops had been called on to endure since Moore's campaign in 1809, and it was marked by disorders scarcely less flagrant than those which brought the former expedition so near destruction. Incessant rain and rough weather rendered the lot of the soldiers miserable; they continually broke away from the columns to plunder, the numerous droves of swine proving an irresistible temptation to some of them; many hundreds of stragglers fell into the enemy's hands. This cause, added to the casualties in action with the enemy,

Irregularities during the retreat.

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ÆT. 43. brought up the total loss of the Allies during their retreat to a very formidable figure—not less than 7,000 men. Wellington, never very patient of irregularities, showed himself less so than usual on this occasion, being chagrined, no doubt, at the result of a campaign which had opened so auspiciously and would have been conducted to a brilliant close, but for the failure of Ballesteros to interrupt the march of Soult. He allowed his vexation to appear in a long circular letter of indiscriminate censure addressed to his Generals of divisions and brigades.

Wellington rebukes his officers.

"... The discipline of every army after a long and active campaign becomes in some degree relaxed ... but I am concerned to have to observe that the army under my command has fallen off in this respect in the late campaign to a greater degree than any army with which I have ever served or of which I have ever read. Yet this army has met with no disasters, it has suffered no privations which but trifling attention on the part of the officers could have prevented ... nor has it suffered any hardship excepting those resulting from the necessity of being exposed to the inclemency of the weather at the moment when it was most severe. ... I have no hesitation in attributing these evils to the habitual inattention of the officers of regiments to their duty as prescribed by the regulations of the service and by the orders of the army. I am far from questioning the zeal, still less the gallantry and spirit of the officers of the army, and I am quite certain that if their minds can be convinced of the necessity of minute and constant attention ... they will in future give their attention to these points."

This letter, which was intended to be addressed to the general officers only, and to be regarded as confidential by them, unluckily found its way into the regimental order books, and thence into London papers. Lord Wellington, it is said, was much displeased with this; many good officers, conscious of having done their duty well, were deeply indignant because no distinction seemed to be drawn between

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the behaviour of well-disciplined regiments and disorderly ones; and all alike felt the injustice of the Commander of the Forces' reference to the absence of hardship. Exposure to weather of all sorts, by night and day, without tents and at all seasons, was in itself a pretty stiff test of endurance; and when he compared the slowness of British troops in preparing their meals with "the facility and celerity with which the French soldiers cooked," Lord Wellington seemed to have overlooked the advantage which the French enjoyed in being allowed to make fuel of doors, shutters, and roofs wherever they bivouacked, whereas his own soldiers were severely punished if they did so, and their fatigue parties often had to march several miles to cut wood. ANN. 1812.

Festivities at Ciudad Rodrigo.

Lord Wellington took occasion of the investment of the Hon. Lowry Cole as a Knight of the Bath to give a fête in Ciudad Rodrigo. Sixty-five of the principal officials sat down at the Commander-in-chief's table; a ball followed in a saloon of which the temperature was rather low for complete enjoyment, for it was hard frost at the time, and several yards of the roof, knocked off during the siege, had not been replaced. Wellington, detained by business in Freneda till half-past three, rode the seventeen miles to Rodrigo in two hours, dined, danced, supped, was in the saddle again at half-past three in the morning, galloped back to Freneda by six o'clock, and was despatching business again at noon.* His only companion in this moonlight ride was the Hon. Alexander Gordon.†

Wellington's extraordinary physical endurance.

Wellington's extraordinary powers of endurance astonished many of his officers, and Mr. Larpent mentions many instances of it at this period. For example, on 8th May he started, on horseback of course, at 7 a.m. for Castel Rodriguez, eight-and-twenty miles distant, reviewed there General Cole's division, and was back in his quarters at Freneda for dinner between four and five in the afternoon.‡ Again, on the 15th of the

* *Larpent*, i. 114. † Killed at Waterloo. ‡ *Larpent*, i. 168.

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ÆT. 43. same month, hearing of damage to the pontoon train at Sabugal, off he galloped twenty-six miles and back, to satisfy his own eyes as to what was necessary. On the 17th, he rode to the front and inspected the Light Division under General Anson, gave a large dinner in the evening, and next morning rode eighteen miles to Friexada to inspect the cavalry division.*

It was this marvellous union of resolution and physical energy which rendered so felicitous and so imperishable the sobriquet conferred on Wellington of the "Iron Duke."†

His daily routine, though liable to interruption by the enemy's movements, remained the same throughout his campaigns. Rising each morning at six, he used to write till nine, when he had breakfast. The forenoon he spent with the quartermaster- and adjutant-generals, commissary-general, and other heads of departments—business which generally lasted till 2 or 3 p.m. Then he would mount and ride till six, return to dinner, and write again from nine till midnight, which was his regular hour for going to bed.‡

* *Larpent*, i. 179–181.

† It is true it came to him in a roundabout way. An iron steamship, a novelty at the time, was launched in the Mersey and named the *Duke of Wellington*. The vessel came to be known as the *Iron Duke*, and the transition from the subject to the eponymus was too easy and obvious not to be effected.

‡ *Tomkinson*, 108.

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GENERAL VISCOUNT WELLINGTON, ÆTAT. 43.

(From a Drawing in Chalk by the Spanish artist Goya. Original in the British Museum.)

[*Vol. i. p.* 394.

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CHAPTER XII.

CAMPAIGN OF VITORIA.

1813.

	Discontent in England at the progress of the war.
January, 1813.	Wellington visits Cadiz.
March	Position and strength of the armies.
May 18	Advance of the left wing from Lamego.
May 22	Advance of the centre and left from Freneda and Bejar.
	Retreat of the French.
May 29	Junction of Graham with Wellington at Miranda de Douro.
	Evacuation of Burgos.
June 14, 15 . .	Passage of the Ebro.
June 21	Battle of Vitoria.
	Decisive defeat of the French.
	Wellington is made a Field Marshal.
,, 22 . . .	Disorderly conduct of the Allies.
July 1	The French are driven across their frontier.
,, 13	Soult resumes command of the French armies.
,, 25	He forces the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles.
	Assault on San Sebastian repulsed.

Public discontent in England at the course of the war.

THE effect on public opinion and feeling in England of the third retreat of Wellington before the French Marshals was the reverse of favourable. Those whom the flush of victory had rallied to the moral support of the army in the field and of the ministers responsible for the conduct of the war relapsed into gloomy foreboding and angry reproach. The contest, they complained, was now entering its fifth year, and the French gripped Spain as hard as ever; blood and treasure had been lavished in vain, and if the nation was to

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ÆT. 43. be spared further sacrifice, the army must be recalled before Napoleon should return victorious from Moscow to sweep the remains of it into the sea. In truth, the strain on the country had neared the limits of endurance; war prices had brought upon many families at home privations more severe, in some respects, than those encountered by the troops in the field; the national debt was rolling up to an appalling volume; most serious of all, the difficulty of manning the fleet and recruiting the army had been greatly aggravated by the war with the United States—itself the result of the raids of British pressgangs on American citizens. Nevertheless, the courage of ministers had been screwed to the sticking point; there was no more talk of evacuation; the despatches of Lord Liverpool and Lord Bathurst breathed unabated confidence in the Commander of the Forces. Then, to confirm their courage and brighten their hopes, towards the end of the year came tidings of Napoleon's awful disasters in Russia. On 18th December the Emperor was back in Paris, having sacrificed the whole of his magnificent army of invasion.

During the winter months, British reinforcements, especially of cavalry, the arm in which Wellington had most complained of weakness, arrived in Lisbon on a scale which, though it bore no comparison with the mighty resources of a national conscription, was certainly astonishing as the results of voluntary enlistment.* In the spring of 1813 Wellington had under his command in Spain nearly 200,000 allied troops —including 55,000 British and 31,750 Portuguese on the frontier of Portugal, and Sir John Murray's Anglo-Sicilian force near Alicante, which had been augmented to 16,000. Murray's operations, although lacking in vigour and success, were of important service in respect of the attention they demanded from Suchet's army. One very important element

* Twenty-five thousand volunteers were obtained from the militia, each of them receiving a bounty of twelve or fourteen guineas. Tents were supplied for the first time during the war for the troops, but they proved of doubtful advantage on the advance, owing to the difficulty of transport.

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in the strength of the Allies was the presence of the British fleet, which supplied a movable base whence supplies could be drawn from almost any point on the Spanish and Portuguese coasts. ANN. 1813.

In January Lord Wellington paid a visit to Cadiz, in order to lay before the Cortes his measures for the reorganisation of the Spanish forces. He met with a splendid reception: the Cortes, who, immediately before the battle of Salamanca, had been on the point of rendering submission to King Joseph, had drawn fresh courage from that victory; hatred of the French and the signs of failure in Napoleon's ascendency combined to induce even the anti-British party to sink their dislike of the *Rubios*,* and suspend their intrigues. Nevertheless, the task undertaken by Wellington in the command of the armies of Spain brought very little additional strength at first to compensate for the increase of labour devolving on himself. Wellington visits Cadiz.

Such as they were, the Spanish armies were disposed as follows: the first army, under Copons, in Catalonia, said to number 10,000; the second, under Elio, in Murcia, 20,000; the third, under Del Parque, in the Sierra Morena, about 12,000, with a reserve under the Conde d'Abispal, in Andalusia, numbering 15,000; and the fourth, under Castaños, in Estremadura and the North, estimated at 40,000. Besides these, the partidas and guerillas were growing in numbers and daring, especially in the North, constantly interrupting the communications of the French and harassing their detachments. Position and number of Spanish forces.

On the other hand, the French armies, though still numerically superior to the Allies, had undergone considerable deterioration during the winter. Napoleon had begun to withdraw some of his best troops, replacing them with newly enrolled conscripts; and, to crown all, King Joseph informed the Emperor that he could no longer serve with Soult, and if that Marshal remained in Spain he himself must leave it.

* The red-coats.

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ÆT. 43. Soult, accordingly, was recalled to Paris, but not in disgrace: the Emperor, conscious of the quality of this well-tried servant, put him in command of the Imperial Guard in Germany.

Position and number of French forces.

King Joseph was now in a position to display his qualities in the disposal of 231,486 men, for such, on 15th March, 1813, was the total strength of the French armies in Spain, 29,422 being cavalry.* Of these 68,000 were in Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, 10,000 were in Madrid, and the remainder scattered on a line extending from the Tormes to Bayonne. Joseph, albeit nominally Generalissimo, was subject to constant instructions from the Emperor as to the conduct of the campaign, and the Generals of the different armies were appointed directly by the Emperor himself. Repeatedly and urgently Napoleon wrote in January and February, directing the King to make Valladolid his headquarters, keeping but a single division in Madrid, and to concentrate his forces for the pacification of the northern provinces. In reply to Joseph's supplications for money, Napoleon advised him to restore order in the rich and fertile provinces of which he was King, and they would prove amply able to sustain the forces quartered in them. The insurrection in the north had passed out of Caffarelli's control; Navarre and Biscay were in the hands of the Spanish chiefs by the end of February; the Emperor, dissatisfied with Caffarelli's conduct, recalled him, and appointed the abler Clausel to command the army of the North in his place. General Gazan succeeded Soult in the army of the South; General Reille, a resolute and skilful officer, took over the army of Portugal, and Marshal Jourdan remained as lieutenant to the King with the army of the Centre.

Wellington's plan of campaign.

Now, the winter months, though they brought repose to the troops, were no period of inaction for their commander. Constant exercise was as natural to that iron frame as it was habitual to the sleepless will and intellect within it.

* Extract from Imperial Muster Rolls (*Napier*, v. 618).

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On hunting days he seemed to throw all business to the winds; none but those who had affairs that would not wait dared to interfere with his delight in the chase and the work of his hounds. Yet none may say how that busy brain was working while hounds were drawing the cistus scrub or pressing a sinking fox. War in the Peninsula could not be carried on through an indefinite number of campaigns: there must be a term to the patience of England, to the endurance of her soldiers, to advance and retreat, to reconnoitring and counter-marching. When next the vines began to shoot and the wheat was ankle-deep, British drums and bugles must sound a long farewell to Portugal. Wellington no longer had to consider the southern provinces of Spain: they were freed from the invader, and the French armies were gathered, no more for invasion, but to repel an advance towards the frontier of France itself. ANN. 1813.

The question Wellington had to decide was on what line he should make that advance. Hitherto the route had lain either by Salamanca or Talavera, and the winter was spent by the French in strengthening the great natural barrier of the Douro, whence they would threaten the enemy's left flank when the season should tempt him to move along either of those well-known ways. But how if he were to turn that great line of defence? That was the problem round which his thoughts constantly revolved—the idea which neither the accumulation of administrative detail nor the excitement of field sports could ever obscure. At the very moment when Napoleon was urging vainly upon his elder brother the precept that "to command an army rightly, a General must think of *nothing else*," Wellington was carrying it into effect.

Sir Thomas Graham, his senior General of division (Wellington always protested against the term "second in command" as conveying an idea which he could not admit as having any reality in it), had been absent in England on sick-leave throughout the campaign of Salamanca; so

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Æt. 44. had his Quartermaster-General, Sir George Murray—the two Generals upon whom he relied most for combined resolution and discretion in conducting the war in the Peninsula. Beresford he liked, and could trust thoroughly, within certain limits of emergency; Hill—"Daddy" Hill—he loved, and put larger confidence in his military talent than in Beresford's; but Graham and Murray were less fearful of responsibility than any others. These, beyond all others, Wellington recognised as kindred in command to himself.

Opening of the campaign of 1813.

To Sir Thomas Graham was entrusted the execution of the design which had been matured in his chief's mind; it was his fortune to make the first move in what all hoped—what Wellington himself believed—was to prove the final departure of the British from the confines of Portugal.* On 18th May he received orders to cross the Douro with the left wing of the army, consisting of the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Divisions, with Pack's and Bradford's Portuguese brigades, and a large force of cavalry, to advance through Tras-os-Montes to Zamora, and thereafter effect a junction with the

The Allies advance.

right of the army at Valladolid. On the 22nd Wellington broke up from his headquarters at Freneda, moving forward on the road to Salamanca with the Light and 2nd Divisions, Amirante's Spanish Division, and cavalry; while on the same day Sir Rowland Hill put his corps in motion from Bejar to form a junction with the Commander of the Forces at Alba de Tormes. Once again the converging streams of war were pouring inland, and the French, seeing their flank on the Douro turned, began falling back before Wellington's formidable array. General Villatte, desirous of forcing the Allies to display their real strength, lingered too long with

* "Picton told me a strange story. He was riding with Lord W. at the head of the advanced guard, when they crossed a rivulet which was the boundary of Portugal; on which Wellington turned round his horse, took off his hat, and said 'Farewell, Portugal! I shall never see you again.' This was so theatrical—so unlike Wellington—that I should say at once it *cannot* be true; but Picton, who told it me, was truth itself" (unpublished letter from Sir R. Donkin to Col. William Napier).

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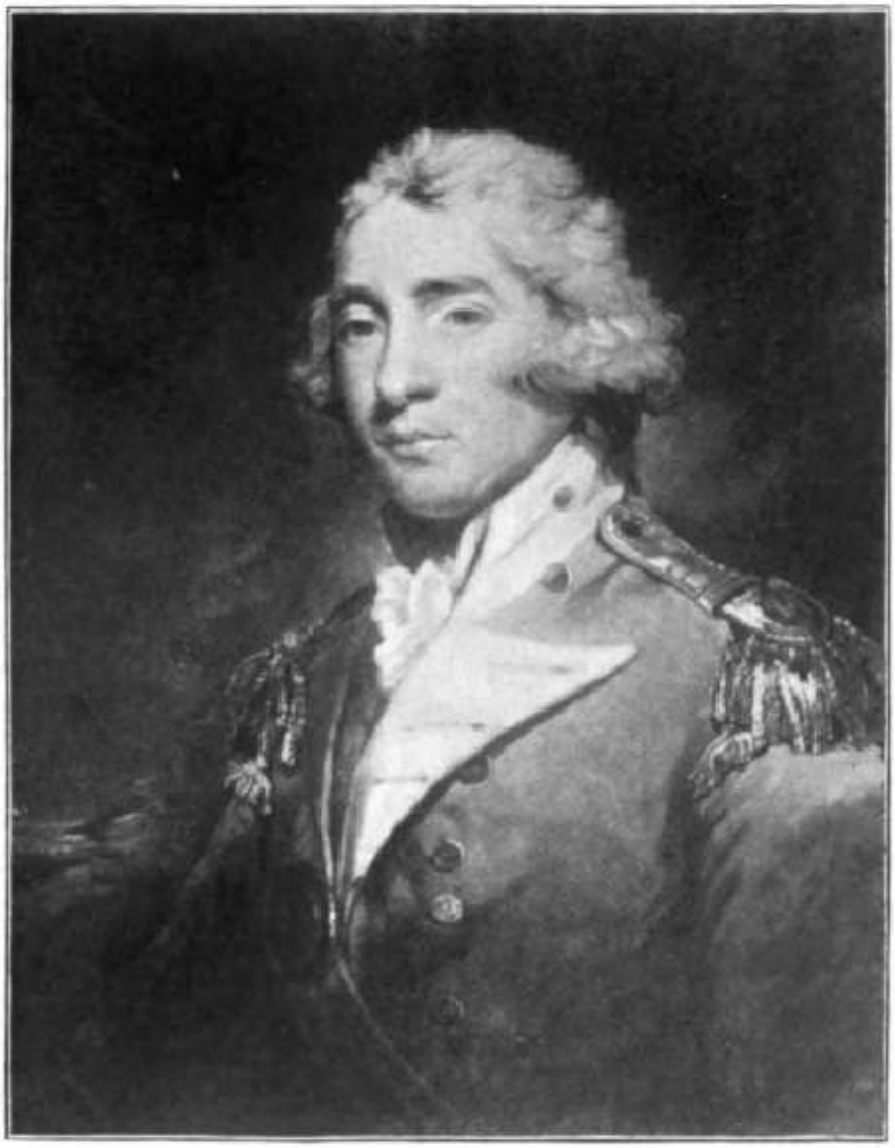

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR THOMAS GRAHAM,
AFTERWARDS GENERAL LORD LYNEDOCH, K.C.M.G.
(*From a Painting by Raeburn.*)

[*Vol. i. p.* 310.

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his division in Salamanca, and received chastisement from the cavalry of Fane and Victor Alten. It had been more severe but for the magnificent behaviour of his men, who moved steadily in their squares in the direction of Babila Fuente, keeping the horsemen at bay, notwithstanding that scores of men perished in the ranks from sheer heat and exhaustion. The cavalry, however, captured seven guns and 200 prisoners. ANN. 1813.

Junction of Wellington and Graham at Miranda de Douro.

Having regained the line of the Tormes, Wellington, leaving his right and centre encamped between Miranda de Duero and Toro under Hill's command, was slung across the Douro in a basket suspended from the cliffs of Miranda, and went off on the 28th to satisfy his anxiety as to Graham's progress. Graham, although his march through the wild Tras-os-Montes had been one of incessant difficulty, was true to tryst. His instructions had been to be ready to force the passage of the Esla on the 29th, and Wellington found him on the right bank of that river, with his left at Tarvara, in touch with the Galician troops about Benavente. The enemy, whose whole attention had been concentrated upon the advance of the Allies south of the Douro, was taken by surprise by their appearance on the Esla, and fell back before Graham through Zamora to Toro on 1st June. Blowing up the bridges behind them, the French continued to retreat, their rear-guard receiving a severe handling at Morales from the newly formed British Hussar Brigade.* On 3rd June Sir Rowland Hill brought the centre and right of the army across the Douro at Toro, and the united army continued its march towards Valladolid, having carried almost without bloodshed the line of the Douro which the French had spent so many months in strengthening.

Now was vindicated the rightness of Napoleon's judgment. Could Joseph have brought himself to forget the empty shell of Madrid, had he resolutely quelled the insurrection in the

* The 7th, 10th, and 15th were converted about this period from Light Dragoons into Hussars.

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ÆT. 44. north and defended Valladolid by holding strongly the line of the Tormes and the Esla, his flanks would have remained secure, and Wellington must have carried a series of highly defensible positions before he could establish communications with the fleet in the Bay of Biscay. Joseph perceived his error too late. Fearing lest the army of the Centre should be cut off from support, this luckless monarch, leaving his capital for the last time in his brief and troubled reign, marched with all speed by Puente de Duero, and effected a junction with the army of Portugal in its retreat upon Burgos. Swiftly 90,000 Allies, with 100 guns, pressed after their retreating foe, on whose flanks the partidas of the North and of Castile gathered more thickly every day. Never was there a country better planned by nature for defensive war. Assuredly, had Masséna or Clausel commanded in this retreat, every league of mountain had been held and fought for; the Douro, the Tormes, the Esla, the Pisuerga had run with blood, instead of offering, one after another, almost as peaceful a passage as the Red Sea did to the Israelites.

The French abandon Burgos.

On 7th June Joseph crossed the Carrion at Palencia; surely a stand would be made at Burgos, where, a few months before, the tricolor had flaunted defiance in the teeth of the English leopards. Not so; Burgos was untenable. Who could have foreseen that the Allies would return so quickly and in such strength? The new works were not half finished, and, as they commanded the old ones, the place could not be held for a single day. It was evacuated without an attempt at defence, yet not without bloodshed, for one of the mines made by the French for the destruction of the fortress exploded outwards, throwing down a wall which fell on a column of infantry in the act of passing, and killing three hundred of them. Still retreating, the French gained the line of the Ebro, and at last the tide of war, which for five years had roared among the western valleys, was about to roll over upon the eastern watershed. It is said that during this period of the march Wellington avoided going

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near his infantry columns, so greatly he dreaded to see that the men were footsore, and thus the blow he burned to strike would have to be deferred. But the soldiers endured splendidly; the longer the march, the harder they swore that "the Frenchies" should pay dearly for bringing them so far. ANN. 1813.

The base which had served the British so long was now five hundred miles behind them, and Wellington established a new one within easy reach of his left flank, directing stores of all kinds to be sent round to Santander. At the same time he summoned, though in vain, the civil and military authorities of Spain to resume their functions in the capital. Up to this point, Joseph had still cherished the idea of resuming the offensive; frequent and urgent had been his messages to Foy and Clausel to come to his support, that he might drive the Allies back behind the Douro. But on reaching the Ebro the scales fell from the King's eyes. Here, at last, he realised that he must make a stand if he was not to be swept out of his kingdom altogether, or, which would be equally ruinous, if the Allies were not to interrupt the French lines of communication between Bayonne and Seville, by way of Madrid. Leaving General Gazan with a strong advanced guard to hold the scarcely accessible defiles of Pancorbo, he occupied the line of the river from Haro upwards, as far to the right as Armiñon and Espejo. Clausel was approaching from the direction of Zaragoza with 14,000 men to reinforce the King, and the whole of the vast convoys and encumbrances accompanying the French army was sent to the rear at Vitoria.

Powerful as he was, and confident as he felt, Wellington was too prudent to risk the difficult passage of the Ebro in face of a foe so strongly posted. Intelligence had been received of the armistice signed at Plesswig on 4th June between Napoleon and the Allies in Germany; all Wellington's staff, including Graham, Hill, and George Murray, believing that this armistice would enable Napoleon to

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ÆT. 44. reinforce his armies in Spain, were opposed to further advance.* Enough, they urged, had been achieved; a good defensive position had been secured, and Wellington himself admitted that more had been accomplished than he had thought possible in such a short time. "But," said he afterwards, "I looked beyond the limits of Spain. I had in view the impression my advance would make upon the Allies in Germany, and I determined to push on."† Nevertheless he neglected no rules. Burgos, had it held out, was to be reduced before the army moved forward; there was no other danger in his rear, he therefore resumed the tactics of constantly working round the enemy's right. With a sweeping movement of his whole force to the left, he circled round the French flank, and, crossing the head waters of the Ebro on 14th and 15th June, passed into the mountainous region between Santander and Guiposcoa. Six days of vehement labour were spent in this wilderness, through which the Spanish Generals and engineers assured Wellington it was impossible to move artillery or even cavalry. He listened respectfully enough to what they had to say, but lost patience with them at last, begging them to mind their own affairs, because his guns had all passed the mountains the day before, and would join him immediately.‡

The Allies cross the Ebro.

Thrice during this operation did some of the allied divisions come into conflict with bodies of the enemy hastening from the position of Pancorbo, which had been turned, to the rendezvous at Vitoria. On 19th June the heads of the various columns debouched in the valley of the Bayas, a confluent of the Zadora, threatening the French right and rear. Reille barred the passage of the Bayas with the army of Portugal, and although he was forced from his position, and driven back across the Zadora by the 4th and Light Divisions, the time spent in this operation enabled the armies of the South and the Centre to combine in a position

* *Croker*, i. 335; *Salisbury MS.* † *De Ros MS.*
‡ Unpublished letter from Sir R. Donkin to Col. W. Napier.

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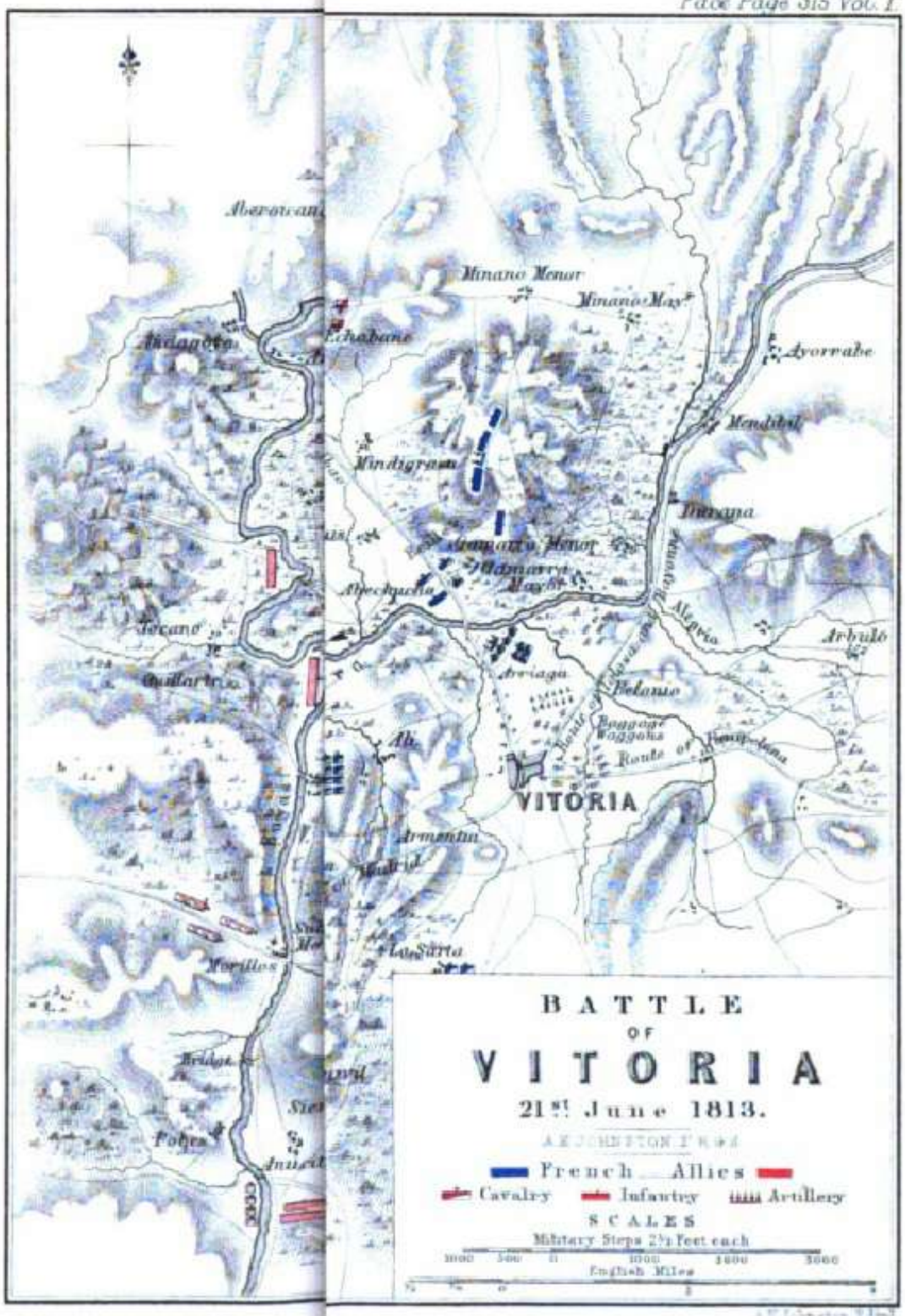

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covering Vitoria. That evening the allied army encamped on the Bayas, and the following day, 20th June, was spent in resting the troops, while each side reconnoitred the position of the other. ANN. 1813.

General Pakenham having been left with the 6th Division at Medina de Pomar to guard the baggage and communications, the battle strength of the Allies was reduced to 80,000 men with 90 guns, while King Joseph had diminished his force to about 65,000 by sending off two convoys into France, each guarded by 3,000 men, and by detaching General Foy to obtain subsistence from Bilbao. The French, however, enjoyed an immense preponderance of artillery, having upwards of 150 pieces.

King Joseph offers battle.

The position taken up by King Joseph was a peculiar and very faulty one, presenting two fronts, in conformity with the course of the Zadora, which, though difficult to ford, was crossed by several bridges. On the right Reille had disposed the army of Portugal with its front to the north, to defend the bridges of Gamara Mayor and Ariago, where the Bilbao and Durango roads cross the river. The army of the Centre lay at a distance of about seven miles from the army of Portugal, nearly at right angles to it, in front of Arinez, facing to the west, and covering the royal road to Vitoria; while Gazan, with the army of the South prolonged the line to the left on the mountain slopes facing the defile of La Puebla. Most of the French cavalry, with the King's Guards, were held in reserve about the village of Gomecha. The vices of this position were manifold. The Zadora, indeed, protected both sides of the front, but it was crossed by no fewer than seven bridges—two on the French right opposite Vitoria, two in front of their left at La Puebla, and three opposite their right centre—yet not one of these had been either destroyed or fortified. The line of battle occupied one side of an irregularly oval amphitheatre, at one end of which was the defile of La Puebla, at the other, Vitoria; passing through the whole length of the position was the royal road,

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Æt. 44. roughly parallel to the Zadora, which was nearly unfordable, with steep rocky banks. A gap of several miles separated the right of the army from the centre; and the arrangement of fronts was such that if the right were forced to retire, the rear of the centre and left would be uncovered; and likewise, if the centre and left were driven back, the retreat of the right wing would be compromised.

Battle of Vitoria.

Lord Wellington, having on the 20th thoroughly examined and appreciated the peculiarities of the King's position, formed his attack in three independent columns, which marched from the encampment on the Bayas early on 21st June. Each column was directed to make its way across the rugged promontory between the Bayas and the Zadora, winding through narrow glens and crossing steep ridges, its departure being timed to bring all three in a nearly simultaneous attack upon the enemy. Sir Thomas Graham, commanding the left column of 20,000 men and 18 guns, was to force the bridges in front of Vitoria defended by Reille; Hill, on the right, also with 20,000 men, was to attack the bridges and defile of La Puebla; while Wellington in person directed the centre, consisting of 30,000 troops, including all the cavalry, except two brigades which rode with Graham.

The British, by this time, were nearly as good at mountaineering as the Spaniards themselves: all went well, though the weather was very thick and wet. By trusting to the punctuality with which his distantly separated columns would arrive at the several points of attack, Wellington gained the time which an inferior tactician might have lost, by advancing to the Zadora in a single mass, and then extending right and left to form line of battle. Nevertheless, there was a period when Wellington felt and betrayed exceeding anxiety and not a little impatience. The commanders of the three columns had been instructed to attack in succession from the right, and Sir Rowland Hill had made a good start at midday, carrying the heights of La Puebla on

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the enemy's extreme left, and, having forced the defile, by one o'clock was engaged in a severe conflict for the village of Subijana de Alava. In front of Wellington was the bridge of Nanclares, which he intended to force with the Light and 4th Divisions as soon as Hill got to work; but the 3rd and 7th Divisions, under Picton and Lord Dalhousie, which were to form his left centre, had not appeared at the right time, having been delayed by rougher ground than the rest. Wellington could not attack without their support; Graham, on the far left, waited to attack Reille till he should hear his commander at work, and thus the general assault was delayed, and some strong language was used. ANN. 1813.

A Spanish countryman told Wellington that the bridge of Tres Puentes on the left of the Light Division was absolutely unguarded, and offered to show the way to it. Kempt's riflemen were detached to seize it, and succeeded so well that they not only dashed across the high and narrow arch, but, ascending the height beyond, ensconced themselves under the crest actually in rear of the French advanced post. They were not unobserved, but the only attempt to dislodge them consisted in firing a couple of round shot among them, one of which, by a strange fatality, killed the brave peasant who had conferred such valuable service on the Allies. The report of these guns served as a signal to Graham, and presently the sound of his battle was heard far on the French right; Hill's attack on Subijana threatened their left, and King Joseph, seeing both his flanks in jeopardy, ordered Gazan to retire by alternate masses, and sent his reserve along the road to Vitoria.

Still Wellington's attack remained incomplete, when, in the very article of time, appeared "old Picton, riding at the head of the 3rd Division, dressed in a blue coat and a round hat, swearing as roundly all the way as if he wore two cocked ones." * The 7th Division under Lord Dalhousie came up at the same time, having also been delayed by the Advance of the allied centre.

* *Kincaid*, 222.

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Æt. 44. difficulties of the ground. While they were deploying into their places in the line of battle, the enemy opened upon them with artillery and musketry from the opposite bank; Kempt's riflemen, springing from their shelter, took the batteries and skirmishers in flank, and this enabled a brigade of the 3rd Division to cross the bridge of Mendoza without opposition. The dark uniforms of the riflemen deceived the British artillerymen, who plied them with round shot, till Picton's men, joining in the attack, showed them they were punishing their own comrades.* The 7th Division now managed to ford the river, and the whole of the French centre and left began to give way. In vain the enemy threw out clouds of skirmishers to protect his retreat. The British horse artillery was brought up to reply, and, amid terrific din, the French columns fell back till they reached the village of

* Wellington was indifferent to ornamental considerations in the clothing of soldiers, but he had warned the Horse Guards of the necessity of keeping the uniforms of British troops distinct from those of the enemy.

General Viscount Wellington to the Military Secretary.

"Freneda, 6th November, 1811.

"I hear that measures are in contemplation to alter the clothing, caps, etc., of the army. There is no subject of which I understand so little; and, abstractedly speaking, I think it indifferent how a soldier is clothed, provided it is in an uniform manner; and that he is forced to keep himself clean and smart, as a soldier ought to be. But there is one thing I deprecate, and that is any imitations of the French in any manner. It is impossible to form an idea of the inconvenience and injury which result from having anything like them, either on horseback or on foot. Lutyens and his piquet were taken in June because the 3rd Hussars had the same caps as the French *chasseurs à cheval* and some of their hussars; and I was near being taken on the 25th September from the same cause. At a distance or in an action colours are nothing; the profile and shape of a man's cap, and his general appearance, are what guide us; and why should we make our people look like the French? A *cock-tailed* horse is a good mark for a dragoon, if you can get a side view of him; but there is no such mark as an English helmet, and, as far as I can judge, it is the best cover a dragoon can have for his head. I mention this because, in all probability, you may have something to say to these alterations; and I only beg that *we* may be as different as possible from the French in everything. The narrow tops of our infantry, as opposed to their broad top caps, are a great advantage to those who are to look at long lines of posts opposed to each other."

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Arinez, where their reserve had been in the morning. Here a determined stand was made; the village was taken and lost and retaken again; be the faults of the French General what they might, none were committed by his officers and soldiers. Their valour availed not: Picton's division, with Kempt's rifle brigade fighting before it, and Dalhousie's division on its left, swept the enemy from the streets and drove them, still keeping their order, along the highway to Vitoria. ANN. 1813.

While Joseph's centre and left were thus hopelessly broken and driven back, General Reille held a firm front against Graham. General Oswald, with the 5th Division, Longa's Spaniards, and Pack's Portuguese, had driven the French advanced guard under General Sarrut out of Arangues and off the heights on the right bank covering the bridges. Longa occupied the northern road, whereupon Sarrut retired steadily and disposed his brigades for the defence of the bridges. He also occupied the village of Gamara Mayor on the right bank, where was one of these bridges. From this they were expelled by a brigade of the 5th Division under General Robinson, which forced the bridge behind the village and captured a gun; but Reille opened fire on them with twelve guns, under cover of which La Martinière reformed his battalions and recaptured the bridge. Oswald sent down another brigade to support Robinson; once more the British possessed the bridge, and once again were driven from it. Joseph's centre and left broken.

Very similar was the result of Graham's attack on Abechuco, which covered the bridge of Ariaga. Repeatedly carried by the British, it was as often retaken by the French, until at both bridges the combat resolved itself into a duel of cannon and small arms, many hundreds of tons of iron and lead being hurled to and fro across the stream that afternoon.

Vain, however, were the efforts of the skilful and valorous Reille. It has been explained how his front lay at right angles to that of the French centre and left; when, therefore, Total defeat of the French.

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Æt. 44. towards evening the approaching din of combat announced to him that the King's line of battle was being forced back from the west, he perceived that his left flank and rear would be laid bare. Thereupon he formed a reserve of infantry at Betoño, to the east of Vitoria, and upon this, when it was clear that the battle was lost and the Allies were in possession of Vitoria on his rear, he withdrew his fighting line, leaving General Sarrut dead at Ariaga bridge. He continued his retreat towards Metanco in fairly good order, but soon his columns were involved in the wreckage of the armies of the Centre and the South. *Sauve qui peut!* Far as the eye could range, fields and hillsides were covered with a flying multitude, not of soldiers only, but of camp-followers and many, many women;* the streets of Vitoria and the roads around were blocked with carriages, wagons, and tumbrils; the guns were abandoned by the waysides, sacrificed by the French officers, as was afterwards said, to save their mistresses.†

Flight of the King.

The King, finding that General Graham had thrown a column across the royal road to Bayonne, directed his flight to the east by the route leading by Salvatierra to Pamplona. Just after his carriage left Vitoria the 10th Hussars came clattering down the main street; Captain Wyndham started with a squadron in pursuit, and overtook the carriage; but Joseph had saved himself by mounting a horse and galloping off with an escort of dragoons, leaving behind, however, all his private correspondence and a number of most valuable pictures. The pursuit continued till nightfall, but the country was so much intersected with ditches as to interfere with the movements of cavalry, and the infantry were worn out with the exertions of a long day, wherefore the number of prisoners taken was out of all proportion to the magnitude

* One of the French officers taken observed to Wellington after the battle, "Le fait est, monseigneur, que vous avez une armée, mais nous sommes un bordel ambulant" (*Stanhope*, 144).

† *Alison*, xvi. 339.

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of the victory. Not so was the spoil: it was enormous. ANN. 1813. One hundred and fifty brass guns—all but two that the French had brought upon the field—450 caissons with 14,000 rounds of ammunition, 2,000,000 musket cartridges, 40,000 lbs. of gunpowder, the baton of Marshal Jourdan, the military chest containing about £1,000,000 sterling, and the whole baggage of the army, were the chief military trophies; but besides these were found immense piles of plate and other valuables, and pictures—the plunder of Spanish churches and palaces—cut out of their frames and rolled up.*

Considering the magnitude and decisive character of the victory, the loss of the Allies must be considered moderate—33 officers killed and 230 wounded, 707 soldiers killed and 4,210 wounded and missing, by far the greater number of casualties being among the British regiments. "I have taken more guns from these fellows," wrote Wellington to his old friend Colonel Malcolm, "in the last action than I took at Assaye, without much more loss upon about 70,000 men engaged. . . . They cannot stand us now at all." †

No tragedy is so vast, so overpowering, as that of the disruption of a splendid army—no horror so appalling as

* These pictures were carefully packed and sent to England. After the peace, Wellington caused a catalogue of them to be prepared, with the assistance of Don Miguel de Alava, which he repeatedly forwarded to the King of Spain in order that he might reclaim those which were his property. The King, however, magnanimously declined to take back what had come into Wellington's hands "in a manner so just and honourable," and made a free gift of them to the conqueror of Vitoria (*Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 500, xiv. 655). They remain in Apsley House to this day, where the public are admitted to see them on certain days. Among the most famous are Correggio's "Christ in the Garden," and Velasquez's "Aguadore" and his portrait of Pope Innocent X. The gold and silver returned in the claim for prize money amounted only to £31,276, but an immense quantity was privately plundered, both by the allied troops and by the peasantry. The French represented the amount of bullion lost at £1,000,000.

† "It is a curious circumstance," notes Wellington in a private letter to Lord Wellesley about his victory, "that the battle was fought yesterday on the ground called in the country *The English Hills*, on which the Black Prince fought a battle against the French, and gained a victory in favour of Don Pedro, called the Cruel." (See also *Stanhope*, 3, and *Croker*, i. 335 and ii. 231.) Wellington,

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Æt. 44. nightfall upon a field strewn with shattered slain and dreadful with groans of wounded men; as in all other tragedies and horrors, the misery is deepened by contrast with the inevitable comic element. One incident of that kind may be given in Lord Wellington's own words.

"After the battle of Vitoria, Madame Gayan, the wife of General Gayan, came into our quarters to look for one of her children which had been lost in the confusion of the French retreat. I ordered inquiry to be made directly; meantime she readily accepted my invitation to dine with us. At dinner she quite forgot her anxieties about the child, and rattled away about Joseph's Court and all the gossip of the French army. Another lady had been left behind, whom Madame Alava had good-naturedly taken into her lodgings. We asked Madame Gayan about her—whether she was not the wife of so-and-so. 'Ah, pour cela—non,' was the reply; 'elle est seulement sa femme de campagne.' Then, seeing Alava extremely disconcerted at his wife having taken her to her own house, she was much amused, and entered into the joke against him. Towards the end of dinner, an officer arrived and told me the child was found in the possession of a soldier, who had taken such a liking to the little boy that he would not part with him unless on a positive order. Upon this Madame Gayan merely remarked, 'Ah, je suis bien aise,' and seemed very well inclined to leave him with the soldier. However, I sent word that the child must be brought to her directly, and she left us in high good humour at her reception." *

Wellington is made Field Marshal.

In recognition of the magnitude of his victory Wellington was raised to the rank of Field Marshal,† receiving the

however, was in error. At the end of March, 1367, the Black Prince's army lay at Vitoria, where his advanced guard under Sir William Felton was cut to pieces by Don Tello. On 2nd April, however, the Prince won a decisive victory over King Henry between Najarra and Navaretta on the right bank of the Ebro, in consequence of which Don Pedro became King of Spain (*Froissart*, cap. ccxxxix. and ccxli.). The place called the English Hills is no doubt where Felton's disaster took place.

* *De Ros MS.*

† There was no precedent for promotion to the rank of Field Marshal in the

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thanks of both Houses of Parliament; while the Spanish Cortes created him Duque de Vitoria, with the lands of Soto de Roma, in Granada, attached to the title in perpetuity. Even more flattering than either of these rewards as a tribute to his renown as a commander was a movement made before the news of Vitoria arrived at the Russian and German head-quarters to obtain Wellington's services as Commander-in-chief of the allied forces in Central Europe. It was a spontaneous admission on the part of the great military powers that the victor of Salamanca was the only General in Europe able to meet Napoleon with any hope of success. ANN. 1813.

Proposal to remove him to command in Germany.

"I should be afraid," wrote Lord Bathurst on 23rd June, "that there would be so much cabal always at work as to make such a command (however flattering) hazardous for your reputation, particularly if the Emperor (of Russia) were to continue with the army. But I throw this out for your consideration in case the war on the Continent should continue another year, and you terminate the campaign this year in Spain, so as to be able to leave it with a part only of the British army to defend the front which we may occupy. For I think that if the prospects continued next year to look favourable on the Continent, we need not make a point of driving the French from every point in Spain, before we diverted our force, or part of our force, to Germany, if by doing so we could take such a leading part in the campaign as would follow from your having the chief, or even a great, command. . . . I shall be glad to have your opinion." *

British service later than that of the Duke of Cumberland fifty years before. "I will candidly confess," wrote the Duke of York, Commander-in-chief, "that my apprehension of that spirit of jealousy which might possibly have been excited by unusual promotion, led me formerly to imagine that a measure of this nature would have embarrassed the public service . . . but your brilliant success is of a nature to overcome all difficulty." The rank carried with it the addition of £7,000 a year to the pay of £5,000 a year allowed to a commander in the field. This promotion rendered Wellington senior to his old chief in the Irish Office, the Duke of Richmond, who, though a Lieutenant-General of older standing than Wellington, immediately volunteered to serve under him in the campaign.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, viii. 17.

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Wellington's despatch to Lord Bathurst, though the terms were almost cold which he employed in describing the scale of the triumph of the allied arms, was warm in praise of the behaviour of the troops.* Unhappily the circumstances of the following days caused a marked change in his tone.

Disorderly conduct of the allied army.

29th June.—"It is desirable that any reinforcements of infantry which you may send to this army may come to Santander, notwithstanding that I am very apprehensive of the consequence of marching our vagabond soldiers through the province of Biscay in that state of discipline in which they and their officers generally come out to us. . . . We started with the army in the highest order, and up to the day of battle nothing could get on better; but that event has, as usual, totally annihilated all order and discipline. The soldiers of the army have got among them about a million sterling in money, with the exception of about 100,000 dollars which were got for the military chest. The night of the battle, instead of being passed in getting rest and food to prepare them for the pursuit of the following day, was passed by the soldiers in looking for plunder. The consequence was that they were incapable of marching in pursuit of the enemy, and were totally knocked up. The rain came on, and increased their fatigue, and I am quite convinced we have now out of the ranks double the amount of our loss in the battle; and that we have lost more men in the pursuit than the enemy have; and have never in any one day made more than an ordinary march. . . . The new regiments are, as usual, the worst of all." †

Crippled, however, as the Allies were for pursuit by their own disorderly conduct, the plight of the French could scarcely have been worse. They had lost all that secures defence, comfort, even sustenance, to an army in the field; to quote the words of General Gazan himself, "Generals and subordinate officers alike were reduced to the clothes on their backs, and most of them were barefooted."

The pursuit was marked by an incident so painful that the

* *Despatches*, x. 446–453. † *Ibid.*, 472.

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temptation is strong to pass it over in silence. Nevertheless it must be told, for it excited a strong feeling of indignation in the British army at the time, and, besides, illustrates even more forcibly than his treatment of Colonel Bevan at Almeida* that infirmity which, through an exaggerated exercise of will and an incapacity of admitting that he had himself made a mistake, sometimes caused Wellington to act unjustly to other officers. Captain Norman Ramsay received orders to lead his troop of horse artillery in pursuit of the flying French. Lord Wellington spoke to him as he passed, and told him to take his troop to a neighbouring village, adding that, if necessary, he would send further orders in the course of the night. At 6 a.m. next morning an Assistant-Quartermaster-General rode up and desired Ramsay to join the brigade to which his troop belonged. Scarcely was the troop in motion before a written order came from Quartermaster-General Murray, directing Ramsay to join General Anson's brigade. Finally, Wellington himself arrived, was furious when he found Ramsay had marched without orders direct from himself, and ordered him into immediate arrest.

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Wellington's harshness to Norman Ramsay.

Now Ramsay, whose exploit at Fuentes de Oñoro† had earned him undying fame, had done good service during the battle on the 21st, and had well earned his brevet. Wellington's chief officers interceded warmly for their gallant comrade, but in vain. Wellington's well-known partiality for Ramsay seemed only to render him the more implacable about what he construed as disobedience of orders. He declared that he had forbidden Ramsay to move till *he himself* sent orders; he would listen neither to Ramsay's explanation that he did not so understand what Lord Wellington had said to him, nor to the confirmatory assurances of Lieut. Macleod, a sergeant and a corporal, who had heard what passed between the Commander-in-chief and the captain, and had put on the words a similar construction to Ramsay. The result was that Ramsay was not mentioned in despatches

* See p. 233, *supra*.

† See p. 226, *supra*.

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as he should have been, missed his brevet, and remained under arrest for three weeks.*

King Joseph's retreat.

The indefatigable Reille rallied two divisions and some cavalry before Salvatierra on the 22nd, and acted as rear-guard to the King's hapless columns, which reached Pamplona on the 24th. Joseph here lost to the Light Division and Alten's cavalry one of the only two guns he had saved from the field of Vitoria, but he strengthened the garrison in the fortress and pushed on up the valley of Roncesvalles on the 25th.

On the 23rd Lord Wellington once more detached General Graham's column to intercept Foy's retreat from Bilbao. Foy, however, was too quick for him; for, having collected the garrisons of all the Biscayan fortresses except San Sebastian and Santona, and having recovered the escort of the convoy sent off from Vitoria on 19th June, he retired upon Tolosa, where he offered battle on the 25th. Graham, however, turning both his flanks with the Spanish divisions of Longa and Mendizabel, attacked him in front, blew open the gate of the town which constituted the strength of his centre, and drove him further towards the frontier. Having thrown a garrison of 2,600 into San Sebastian, Foy crossed the Bidassoa on 1st July, entering French territory and effecting a junction at Vera with Reille's army of Portugal, which had received artillery and stores from Bayonne.

Investment of San Sebastian.

Graham then invested San Sebastian, which Mendizabel was already blockading with 7,000 Spaniards.

General Clausel, meanwhile, had been hastening to Vitoria with a corps of 14,000 men in obedience to Joseph's command, and, not having heard of the battle, arrived there on the 22nd to find it occupied by the 6th Division, which had

* It is said that Ramsay never recovered from the grievous sense of injustice caused by this affair. He was present with his troop at Waterloo, and Wellington spoke kindly to him as he rode down the line. Ramsay did not answer, merely bowed his head gravely, and was shot through the heart about 4 p.m. (See *Temple Bar Magazine*, August, 1899.)

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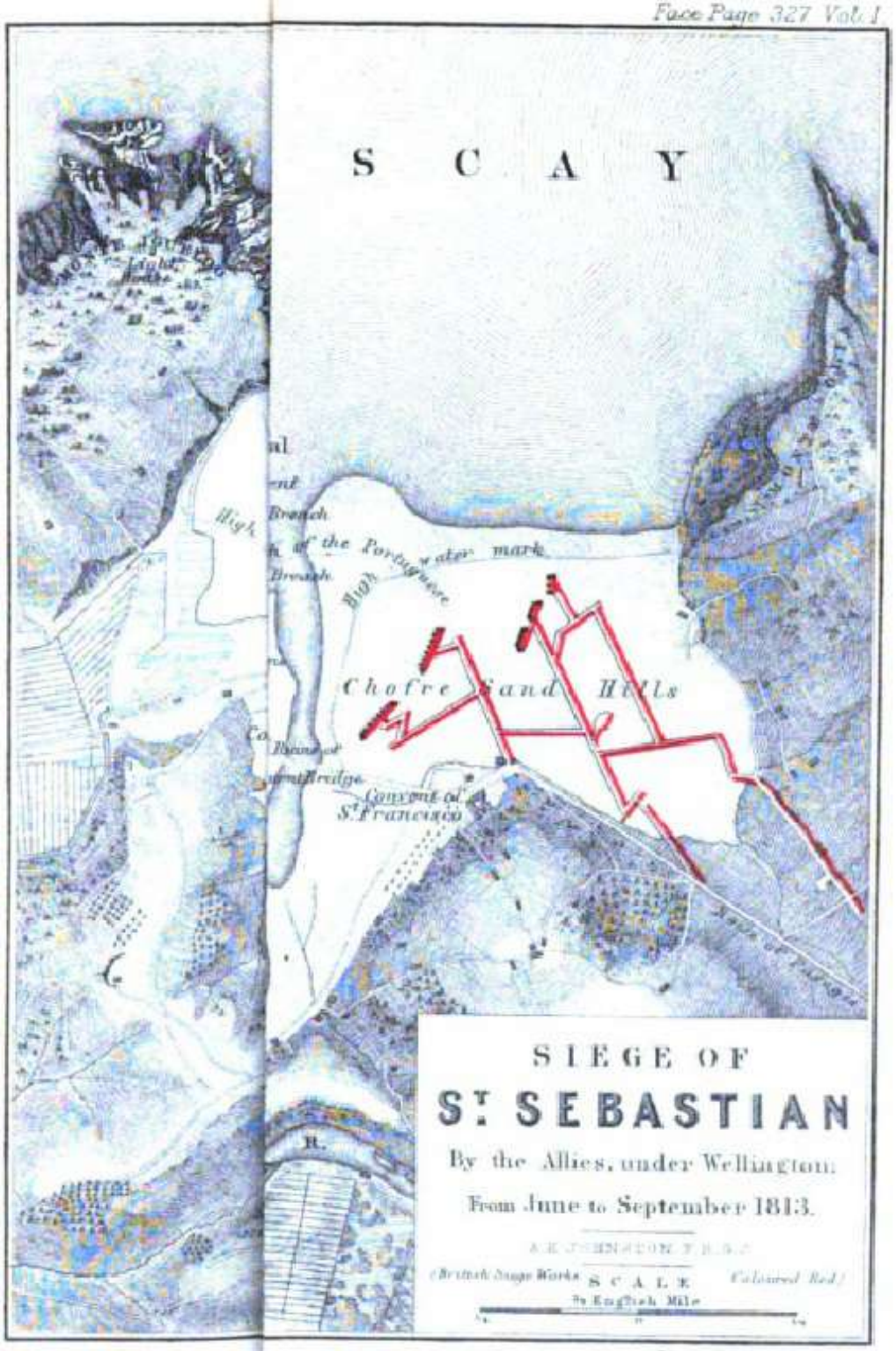

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been brought up from Medina de Pomar. He beat a rapid retreat to Logroño, whence he reached Tudela by forced marches late on the 27th, intending to gain the frontier by way of Olite and Tafalla. Wellington, however, anticipated him, for, leaving General Hill to invest Pamplona, he marched down the valley of the Zidaro and barred that door of escape. Clausel, warned by a friendly alcalde of the danger before him, wheeled about in his tracks and made for Zaragoza, closely followed by Mina's partidas, intending to await Suchet's arrival from the east. But Mina took care to circulate reports that the allied army was close behind him; Clausel, therefore, destroying his baggage and some of his artillery, made his escape to France through the pass of Jaca. ANN. 1813.

Of the French armies in Spain, that of Suchet alone remained, for which it was intended that Sir John Murray should find occupation. However, on the second day of the pursuit from Vitoria, an aide-de-camp, carrying despatches from Murray to England, came to Wellington's quarters and announced that Murray had raised the siege of Taragona and embarked his army.* Wellington bade him keep his news to himself, otherwise "we were all in such triumph, he would at the very least have been turned out of the room." † Murray had failed, and incurred some of the penalty of failure; nevertheless his presence in the South had kept Suchet at a distance, which Suchet, under the circumstances, showed no inclination to diminish. But Wellington could not pursue his advantage, leaving the fortresses of San Sebastian and Pamplona in his rear. Had his rank in military history rested only on his conduct of sieges, Wellington's renown would never have exceeded that of hundreds of brave officers of mediocre attainment. From one cause or another—from miscalculation or deficiency of means, or from want of experience in the science of reducing fortified places—errors were repeatedly made, most costly

* Murray was afterwards tried by court-martial for his conduct.

† *Stanhope*, 58.

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in lives, time, and money, which, had Napoleon been in personal command in the Peninsula, most assuredly would have brought about a different end to the campaign. There were very few regular engineer officers; almost any officer with a turn for drawing seems to have been eligible as a volunteer;* the mere handful of trained sappers and miners were supplemented by fatigues from the infantry.

Siege of San Sebastian.

San Sebastian occupies a narrow peninsula lying between a harbour and the estuary of the river Urumea. The land front of the town was protected by a rampart 350 yards long, between which and the land ran a sandy spit, covered at half tide, while at the seaward extremity of the isthmus rises a precipitous hill nearly 400 feet high, on which stood the castle of La Mota. In its main natural features and their adaptation to defence the place bears a general resemblance to Dunbarton. In front of the protecting curtain or rampart projected a hornwork, and the flanks of the town were protected by ramparts twenty-seven feet high. The works, however, were not formidable; there were no bomb-proofs; water was carried in by an aqueduct, which Mendizabel cut as soon as he blockaded the place on 28th June, after which the garrison of 3,000, and the inhabitants, had to rely for water on some very impure wells. Altogether there seemed nothing to prevent the conquerors beginning the siege with light hearts;† but in General Rey they had to reckon with a determined and skilful defender.

On 9th July Graham's corps arrived to relieve Mendizabel's Spaniards, and siege operations were begun in earnest. As General Reille lay in the passes by Vera, threatening to interrupt the siege, Wellington drove him back on the 15th, and placed the 7th and Light Divisions there to cover Graham's operations. At the same time the Conde de la Bisbal blockaded Pamplona, covered by the bulk of the allied forces, disposed so as to guard the passes from

* *Dumaresq MSS.* † *Despatches*, x. 520.

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LIEUT.-GENERAL THE HON. SIR GALBRAITH LOWRY COLE, G.C.B.
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Roncevalles on the right to Los Alduides, in French territory, on the left. ANN. 1813.

It had been Wellington's intention to lay siege to Pamplona as well as to San Sebastian, but the bad news about Murray warned him that Suchet might advance through Catalonia upon his right flank, and he was unwilling to lock up 15,000 or 20,000 good troops in siege operations, which, in the absence of proper appliances, must have lasted for five or six weeks.* He contented himself, therefore, with establishing a strict blockade on Pamplona.

Napoleon appoints Soult his lieutenant in the war,

The calamities of the retreat from Moscow, enough to paralyse the power of any ruler of mortal mould, had roused the spirits of the Germans to combine with the Russians against their oppressor. Before the end of spring Prussia was even as Spain and Portugal had been in 1808; her people were arming and drilling, and Napoleon had no more than 150,000 troops, mostly raw conscripts, at hand to suppress the rising. In spite of this, and a serious weakness in cavalry, he won against the allied Russian and Prussian armies the victories of Lützen (2nd May) and Bautzen (20th and 21st May), which led to the armistice of Poischwitz on 4th June. Three weeks later he received the fell tidings of Vitoria and the expulsion of four of his armies from the Peninsula. With indomitable patience and courage he set himself to repair the consequences of defeat and protect the soil of France. And this at the moment when the tenour of his interview with Metternich on 28th June left Austria no alternative but to range herself on the side of his active enemies! From Dresden he despatched Soult—the slandered Soult—to replace Joseph as Imperial Lieutenant in the Peninsula, with command-in-chief of the army of Spain—a concise but melancholy term, denoting what had once been the armies of the North, the South, and the Centre.

Travelling at speed, Soult arrived in the Pyrenees on 13th July to find, in addition to the three armies named in his

* *Despatches*, x. 506.

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Æt. 44. commission, the wreck of a fourth—the army of Portugal—awaiting his reorganising power. No more capable hand and head could have been applied to the task.

With 77,500 men, he assumed the offensive on 24th July, by advancing to relieve San Sebastian and Pamplona. The use of good roads along the northern flank of the Pyrenees gave him an advantage over Wellington which far outweighed the French inferiority of numbers. It enabled him to concentrate his forces rapidly at any point in the series of positions occupied by the Allies—positions isolated from lateral communication by lofty and impassable mountains. His experienced eye recognised the opportunity for swift and, as far as possible, secret action. Massing 60,000 troops at Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, he threw forward two columns simultaneously, one on the pass of Maya, the other on that of Roncesvalles. The first of these was held by Sir Rowland Hill, with part of the 2nd Division and some of Silveira's Portuguese; the other, separated from Maya by twenty miles of mountain, was defended by Byng's Brigade of the 2nd Division and Morillo's Spanish Division, supported by the 4th Division, the whole being under command of Sir Lowry Cole.

Soult forces the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles.

On the morning of the 25th Count d'Erlon led 20,000 men to attack the triple pass of Maya. Falling upon two brigades commanded by Major-General the Hon. William Stewart, he took them by surprise, for there had been a grave neglect of military precaution; Stewart himself, being some miles distant on the right, was recalled by the sound of firing.* The Allies were driven out of the pass with the loss of four guns;† the 92nd Highlanders, especially, suffering very severely. The position had been lost straightway, but

* *De Ros MS.* "A surprise, occasioned by the fancy people have to attend to other matters but their own concerns, and to form opinions of what is passing in other quarters. . . . With common precaution, General Stewart had men enough to defend the pass" (*Despatches*, x. 596).

† "I was very sorry to have lost those guns, as they are the only guns that have ever been lost by troops acting under my command" (*Despatches*, xi. 107).

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for the opportune arrival of a brigade of the 7th Division under General Barnes, which executed a brilliant charge, regaining enough of the heights to enable the pass to be held. Badly as the British detachment in the Maya pass had fared, matters went even worse with that in Roncesvalles. Cole's right flank, although reinforced by Picton's 3rd Division, was fairly turned by Soult in personal command of 35,000 men, and the Allies were forced to retire at night to Zubiri. Hill, accordingly, finding his right flank bare, retired also to Irurita, the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles both remaining in the hands of the French. Although the blockade of Pamplona was still covered, there can be no doubt that the position of the Allies at this time was exceedingly critical, owing to the swift vigour of their opponent, combined with the difficulty of concentrating on any point which he might choose to attack. ANN. 1813.

The 25th July was a day of misfortune for the British arms. The Allies were defending passes along a mountainous front some three-and-thirty miles in extent. While the combats in the passes were in progress, Wellington was beyond the extreme length of the line, on a visit to the siege works at San Sebastian. He arrived there on the morning of the 25th, just after an assault on the works had failed disastrously, owing to its having been undertaken a day too late. Wellington had ordered that it should be made at daybreak, as soon as the tides should be suitable, which was the case on the 24th. When attempted on the 25th, the water was too deep at the appointed hour.* Ammunition having run short, and the condition of the defences being still good, Wellington ordered the siege to be suspended and converted into a blockade. Then, hearing that Soult's demonstration against his right was more than the feint he had believed it to be, he set off at speed for the point of danger, realising, as he afterwards admitted, that to have undertaken simultaneous operations against two places separated so far by such a difficult country, was "one of the greatest faults he ever committed in war." † Siege of San Sebastian suspended.

* *De Roe MS.* † *Ibid.*

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CHAPTER XIII.

The Pyrenees.

1813.

July 28, 1813. First battle of Sorauren.
,, 30 . . . . Second battle of Sorauren.
August 2 . . . Soult is driven across the frontier.
,, 6 . . . Siege of San Sebastian renewed.
,, 31 . . Storm and capture of the town.
Disorders of the sack.
Soult attempts to force the Bidassoa.
September 8 . Surrender of the castle of San Sebastian.
October 7. . . Passage of the Bidassoa.
Soult assumes the defensive.
November 10 . Battle of the Nivelle.
"Monseigneur, l'affaire est finie!"

ON his way back from San Sebastian, Lord Wellington received intelligence of the affairs in the passes of the east, but it was not till next morning, the 26th, that he learnt that the Allies had been forced to retire. Reaching Irurita, where General Stewart's column lay, he realised for the first time the full nature of the danger, and despatched several of his staff to direct a concentration of all the troops in the neighbourhood upon Pamplona. Then, having directed the 6th Division to follow him down the valley of the Lanz, he rode on in search of the divisions of Cole and Picton, of whose position he had no information. At Ostiz he fell in with Long's brigade of light cavalry, and, learning that Picton, who, as senior to Cole, had taken over the command, had fallen back as far as Huarte, he despatched General Murray to suspend the movement of troops upon Pamplona.

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MAJOR-GENERAL LORD FITZROY SOMERSET,
AFTERWARDS FIELD-MARSHAL LORD RAGLAN, G.C.B.
(From a Sketch at Apsley House.)

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Next, accompanied only by Lord Fitzroy Somerset, he dashed on for Sorauren. Observing French videttes and patrols on the elevated skyline to the north of the road, implying the presence of a heavy force on the line of march of the 6th Division, he dismounted on the bridge of Sorauren and, resting his writing-case on the parapet, wrote fresh orders to Hill, turning him off the road at Ostiz so as to avoid a collision, and desiring him to sweep round in rear of Picton's position. Hardly had Somerset galloped out along the Ostiz road, and just as Wellington rode out alone towards Huarte, when a patrol of French cavalry entered the middle of the village.* It was one of Wellington's narrowest escapes. ANN. 1813.

He found Picton's array drawn upon the ridges in front of Huarte and Villalba; the 3rd Division on the right, the 4th on the left, with Byng's brigade of the 2nd Division and Campbell's Portuguese. Opposite to them, at no great distance across a narrow valley, the French were in the act of forming line of battle, with Soult himself correcting their position. Then ensued a dramatic scene—a veritable *coup de théâtre*. A Portuguese battalion on the left first recognised the lonely horseman; their shrill *vivas* swelled into a British hurrah, as brigade after brigade heard the welcome news. Men might grumble at their chief's stern discipline on the march, but not one of them but had learnt whose hand steered them surest in the storm of battle. Wellington, determined that the effect of his presence should not be lost upon the enemy, pulled up on an eminence in full view of them; it was then that he first set eyes on his redoubtable adversary.

"A Frenchman employed as a spy came up to me and said, 'Monseigneur, voulez-vous voir le Maréchal Soult?' pointing with his stick at a group of officers on the other side of the valley. I levelled my glass exactly as he pointed, and there, sure enough, I distinctly discerned Soult with his staff round him,

* *De Ros MS.*

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Æt. 44. several of them with their hats off and in an animated conversation. He had just finished writing an order, and was giving instructions to the aide-de-camp, who was going off with it. As I observed him pointing towards a particular direction, where I had reason to anticipate some movement, I paid much attention to his actions, and indeed I saw all that was passing so clearly with my glass that I could almost have fancied I heard the aide-de-camp say, 'Oui, Monseigneur.' The aide-de-camp presently mounted and hurried off with his order, and so convinced was I of its purport that I immediately directed a counter-movement to be made in that quarter, which the result showed was but just in time to prevent Soult's intended operation." *

"I saw his features so distinctly that when I met him in a drawing-room in Paris for the first time, I knew him at once." †

Whether, as Napier suggests,‡ Soult was puzzled by the cheering of the Allies, or whether he was waiting for the arrival of d'Erlon's column, he refrained that day from the general attack which seemed imminent at the moment of Wellington's arrival. He contented himself with an endeavour to seize a detached hill in front of the centre of the Allies, which was bravely and successfully defended by the 4th Portuguese and a Spanish battalion, supported by the 40th British and another Spanish regiment. The French, however, occupied the village of Sorauren, and skirmishing went on along the line till nightfall.

First battle of Sorauren.

Even then, Wellington did not expect that Soult desired a pitched battle. At ten o'clock the following morning he was in the act of communicating this opinion in a letter to Sir Thomas Graham, when the French advanced in force from Sorauren, threatening to turn the allied left. Soult was not aware that the 6th Division, in obedience to Wellington's hasty command written on the bridge of Sorauren, had arrived early in the morning, formed a second line in rear of the 4th Division, with a Portuguese brigade

* *De Ros MS.* † *Stanhope*, 19, 143. ‡ Vol. vi. 130.

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on the heights on the right bank of the Lanz. He knew, ANN. 1813.
indeed, from deserters that Wellington had taken measures of concentration; but the march of the 6th Division, though passing not far from his right flank, had been concealed from him by the hills. Clausel's column, therefore, advancing 16,000 strong from Sorauren, covered by swarms of skirmishers, had no sooner turned Cole's left, than it was entrapped. Two of Cole's brigades changing from front to the left opened fire on one flank of the attacking column, the Portuguese beyond the river pounded their other flank, while in front the 6th Division was drawn across the valley before the village of Oricain. The French retired fighting, while Clausel sent another division to clear the height beyond the river. In this they succeeded, but the Caçadores stationed there rallied, and, supported by Ross's brigade of the 4th Division, drove them down again at the point of the bayonet.

The battle then spread all along the centre and right of the Allies; a battalion of Portuguese in the 4th Division yielded to the pressure, and the French established themselves on the British line; but Wellington brought up the 27th and 48th Regiments, which dislodged them by a spirited charge. The fighting was mostly hand-to-hand, "bludgeon work," as Wellington called it, the 7th, 20th, 23rd, and 40th Regiments charging four several times; after repeated attempts to gain the heights the French drew off in the afternoon to the position they had left in the morning. In this action, out of 16,000 troops in the field, the Allies lost 2,600 killed and wounded, the French 1,800 out of their 20,000. "I never saw such fighting," wrote Wellington to Lord Liverpool, "as on the 27th and 28th of July, the anniversary of the battle of Talavera, nor such determination as our troops showed."*

On the 29th Soult made no fresh attempt upon the Allies, but he received the support of d'Erlon's column, 18,000 strong, coming from the pass of Maya. On the other hand,

* *Despatches*, x. 597.

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Second battle of Sorauren.

Lord Dalhousie arrived at Marcalain with the 7th Division, in touch with General Hill, who still held his position, Lisarza and Arestegui, covering the blockade of San Sebastian. Soult, therefore, although his own force had been increased to about 43,000, beheld his advance barred by 30,000 Allies in line of battle on strong ground, and did not relish the task of dislodging them. Sending off his artillery, his wounded and most of his baggage to recross the frontier, he moved off by his right at daybreak on the 30th, intending to join that detachment which had followed Hill from the pass of Maya, and, by dislodging him, to disengage San Sebastian. But, to mask this movement, he left Reille in the strong position of Sorauren; and Wellington, perceiving his enemy's intention, ordered Dalhousie to attack the French right beyond the Lanz, while Picton crossed the heights above the Zubiri, lately vacated by the French left. As soon as the flanking operations were in progress, Pakenham, who had succeeded to the command of the 6th Division, attacked and carried the village of Sorauren, while Cole drove straight at the centre of the enemy's line. Although Wellington pronounced the enemy's position to be "one of the strongest and most difficult of access he had ever seen occupied by troops," * yet it was carried triumphantly; the French, at all times very nervous about movements on their flanks, abandoned both village and heights in great confusion, losing 2,000 killed and wounded and 3,000 prisoners; while the Allies lost 1900 killed and wounded, 1200 being Portuguese, who covered themselves with glory and received warm commendation from Wellington.† General Foy, on the French left, was cut off from the main body and retired

* *Despatches*, x. 583.

† *Lord Wellington to Lord Liverpool.*

"25th July, 1813.

"The Portuguese are now the *fighting cocks* of the army. I believe we owe their merits more to the care we have taken of their pockets and bellies than to the instruction we have given them" (*Despatches*, x. 569).

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independently with 8,000 men along the ridge between the Lanz and Zubiri valleys, while his comrades fled up the Lanz valley. Wellington continued the pursuit as far as Olague, which brought him at sunset immediately in rear of Soult's attack upon Hill at Buenza, who, though outnumbered by two to one, had held his ground stiffly all day. ANN. 1813.

Soult was now in great peril, for Hill was in his front, having just been reinforced by 5,000 Spaniards under Morillo; Wellington was in his rear with 30,000; while his own forces, by losses in battle and by Foy's exclusion, had been reduced to less than 35,000. There was no course open for him but to strike northwards for France through the difficult pass of Doña Maria, which he did on the night of the 30th. On the 31st Hill overtook the French rear-guard, and a severe conflict which ensued was rendered indecisive by a thick fog which came on, under cover of which the French withdrew. Nevertheless the pursuit continued through the mountains. The Light Division, by a march of frightful severity, intercepted Reille's column in a gorge at Yanzi, and poured death upon the helpless multitude from the summit of a precipice overhanging the narrow way.

Soult is driven across the frontier.

On the 2nd August Soult rallied for a stand at Echellar. Wellington by this time had despatched all but the 4th, 7th, and Light Divisions to reoccupy Roncesvalles, Maya, and the other passes. So greatly were the French demoralized that Barnes's brigade of 1,500 dislodged 6,000 of Clausel's troops from a steep mountain, without waiting for the 4th and Light Divisions which had been sent round to turn the position for them. More fighting went on that day as the French retired from ridge to ridge along the valley of the Bidassoa, beyond which Wellington did not carry the pursuit, for his troops had well earned repose. Enough had been done: disasters such as the critics had prescribed as the meet retribution for Wellington's temerity at Talavera had fallen upon Soult for his bold attempt to regain a grasp on Spain. He had suffered the loss of between 12,000 and 15,000 men, the Allies that

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ÆT. 44. of 7,096; nevertheless, on 31st July the effectives under Wellington's command were only 1,500 less than when Soult first attacked the passes. The stragglers and marauders who had wandered from the colours after the battle of Vitoria amounted to 12,000; many of these returned when there was more fighting to be done, to make atonement for their misdeeds by gallant behaviour against the enemy.

Having regained possession of the passes, Wellington caused them to be strengthened by entrenchments and redoubts, and re-established his headquarters at Lesaca, a little country town, usually quiet enough, but well described by Larpent at the time as intolerably noisy, in addition to the normal character imparted by dirt and vermin. It was crowded with soldiers of three nations, for Longa's Spaniards were here—Longa, "like an English butcher in a handsome hussar dress;" * crowded with country-people selling wine, corn, sour fruit, pig's flesh, what not, to the half-boozed, weary soldiers; crowded with countless mules and muleteers. Yet there was room for pig-killing and dressing in every street; the air was clangorous with discordant noise—with the yells of expiring porkers, with the scarcely more musical wrangles between buyers and sellers, with the dull thumping in upper chambers where it was the fashion to thresh the corn.

Wellington was relieved from apprehension of Suchet's approach by the more vigorous turn given to affairs in the east of Spain by Lord William Bentinck, who had at last arrived on the coast, superseding Murray, about to be tried for his laches at Taragona. This caused Suchet, upon General Paris evacuating Zaragoza and retiring into France, and after Daroca had surrendered to Mina on 11th August, to withdraw the whole of his troops north of the Ebro, where he fixed his headquarters at Lerida. He was cut off from all communication with Soult except through France, for the Allies were now in touch from the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean.

* *Larpent*, ii. 47.

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The approach of autumn rendered the speedy reduction of San Sebastian of supreme importance, and siege operations were resumed there by Sir Thomas Graham on 6th August, although the absence of a sufficient British naval force rendered the blockade somewhat of a farce. This formed matter for a heated correspondence between Lord Wellington on one hand,* and Lords Melville and Bathurst on the other, which it would not be necessary to do more than refer to in passing, were it not that Sir William Napier, becoming almost inarticulate in his fury against the Tory Melville and the Admiralty, has started a tune which subsequent writers, one after another, have sedulously piped, and thrown unmerited obloquy on the minister. No doubt Wellington did feel acutely at this period the absence of British war-ships of sufficient number and strength, not only to blockade the sea approaches to San Sebastian, but to convoy transports and supplies from Coruña and Lisbon; no doubt Napier was faithfully repeating the common complaint of officers of the army; but it is not right that the defence of the Government should be altogether suppressed as it has been hitherto.

ANN. 1813.

Siege of San Sebastian renewed.

In the first place it should be recollected that the advance of the Allies had been rapid beyond all the calculations, even of their commander, who never indicated an advance beyond the Ebro as within the scope of the campaign of 1813.

"Neither from you," wrote Lord Melville in reply to Wellington's complaint, "nor from any other person at your suggestion, did we ever receive the least intimation that more was expected than the protection of your convoys along the coast, till the actual arrival of Sir Thomas Graham on the coast after the battle of Vitoria, and accordingly no provision was made for sieges. . . . In order that there might be no mistake or misunderstanding on this point, I stated distinctly to Lord Bathurst, before you moved out of Portugal, that it was not in our contemplation, because we did not conceive you to expect us, to give the assistance of line-of-battle ships, troop ships, marine corps, or anything

* *Despatches*, x. 592; xi. 17; *Suppl. Despatches*, viii. 272.

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but the security of your transports. . . . Do not suppose . . . that there would have been any hesitation in affording you whatever naval assistance you might require. If it could have been provided by no other means, which I have no doubt it could, it might have been a question with the Government to determine what other object, the Baltic, for instance, or a portion of the American squadron, etc., should have been given up; but *you* would have been secured in what you wanted in the first instance. . . . There are some other matters, however, which depend merely on naval opinions, on which it is indispensably necessary that you should be apprised of our sentiments and intentions. I will take your opinion in preference to any other person's as to the most effectual mode of beating a French army, but I have no confidence in your seamanship or nautical skill. Neither will I defer to the opinions on such matters of the gentlemen under your command who are employed in the siege of St. Sebastian, and which happen to be at variance with those of every naval officer in his Majesty's service. . . . You are not to expect any effectual assistance in that operation from line-of-battle ships, because, from the situation of the place and the nature of the coast, they cannot anchor without extreme risk. . . . If you will ensure them a continuance of easterly wind, they may remain with you, but not otherwise." *

In truth, the British Admiralty showed no indolence at this time. The American war had thrown a great strain on their resources; to meet the emergency ships had been rapidly constructed of fir; there were plenty of them, but great difficulty in finding crews to man them. Additional legislative powers, to compel men to serve, were contemplated; but such a course, as Lord Melville explained to Wellington, would have checked recruiting for the army. It was no narrow departmental spirit which made him add: "In the present circumstances of the country and the nature of the campaign, I had much rather have to encounter ten times the abuse for want of naval exertion, than the evil of really cramping our army." †

* *Suppl. Despatches*, viii. 223, 224. † *Ibid.*, viii. 145.

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On 18th August a new battering train arrived from England; batteries were constructed and fire was opened from sixty pieces on the morning of the 26th. The fortified islet of Santa Clara was captured on the morning of the 27th; on the 29th the fire from the town had been practically silenced, and two breaches were pronounced practicable. Wellington rode over from Lesaca on the 30th, and, before returning, ordered the assault to take place in daylight on the 31st. He called for volunteers to form a storming party of 850 from the 4th and Light Divisions, from the Brigade of Guards and the German Legion; but, previous to that, Robinson's brigade of the 5th Division had been put in orders as the column of attack, and General Leith was indignant at the intention to deprive them of the honour. Therefore at 11 o'clock on the forenoon of the 31st, Robinson led the way. Scarcely had the head of his column shown beyond the trenches, when Sir Richard Fletcher, commanding the Engineers here as he had, with so much renown, at Torres Vedras, was killed by a musket-shot. The storm was successful; of the town garrison 670 were taken alive, but the carnage was frightful. Between 28th July and 31st August the allied troops before San Sebastian lost 45 officers and 716 soldiers killed, 105 officers and 1592 soldiers wounded.

ANN. 1813.

Storm and capture of the town.

As at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, some of the troops on gaining entrance to the town gave way to considerable excesses, which were grossly exaggerated by the democratic party in Spain, and the libel was industriously circulated that Wellington had ordered the town to be burnt and sacked. These slanders having been brought officially to his notice by the Spanish Government, Wellington indignantly repudiated them. Repeatedly urged to bombard the town as the speediest means of causing its surrender, he had firmly refused to do so, as he had refused to do in all his other sieges, confining the fire of his batteries exclusively to the fortifications. The town was burnt, it is true; but that arose from certain traverses, constructed in the streets and filled with

Disorders of the sack.

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ÆT. 44. combustibles, many of which exploded after the British had effected an entrance. In fact, the fire in the town was a serious obstacle to the assailants, who did all in their power to extinguish it.

Wellington was justly indignant at such charges made against himself and his officers. As to the behaviour of the men, it may be well to quote his own admission about their disorder, remembering that he was a commander of long experience, and, if he had a fault, it was not indifference to discipline.

"In regard to the plunder of the town by the soldiers, I am the last man who will deny it, because I know that it is true. It has fallen to my lot to take many towns by storm, and I am concerned to add that I never saw or heard of one so taken, by any troops, that it was not plundered. Notwithstanding that I am convinced it is impossible to prevent a town in such a situation being plundered, I can prove that upon this occasion particular pains were taken to prevent it. . . . If by far the greatest proportion of the officers and non-commissioned officers, particularly of the principal officers who stormed the breach, had not been killed or wounded . . . to the number of 170 out of 250, I believe that the plunder would have been in a great measure, though not entirely, prevented." *

Soldiers, in short, are not steam-engines or electrical machines, which can be set in violent motion one moment, and stopped the next by shutting off the motive power. They are human beings, mostly of the class least practised in self-control, whose passions, vehemently roused by the fury of hand-to-hand conflict, receive fresh fuel in the ecstasy and temptation of conquest. For this reason it is the invariable practice of experienced Generals, after the capture of a place, to replace the attacking columns by fresh troops

* *Despatches*, xi. 173. This explanation was not written till 9th October, but there is grim evidence of Wellington's desire at the time to stop disorder. On 2nd September, at 6.40 a.m., he wrote to Sir Thomas Graham: "You had better send a provost into the town, and have a gallows erected; and the gates kept shut, and *nobody* to be allowed to go in excepting on duty" (*Ibid.*, xi. 59).

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which have not been engaged; but this precaution it was not possible to adopt at San Sebastian until 2nd September, for reasons which fall to be explained presently. ANN. 1813.

In reckoning the causes and extent of the horrors perpetrated in San Sebastian, allowance should be made for the presence in every regiment of ruffianly fellows who bring discredit on the steadiest of their comrades. History preserves the chronicle of crime; the deeper the guilt, the more indelible the record. It commemorates the drunken ruffians in red coats who killed the adjutant of the 15th Portuguese regiment when he interfered with their plundering in San Sebastian;* unhappily it makes no note of thousands of patient, steady soldiers whose reputation suffers for the misdeeds of a few. All are clothed in the same cloth, and all share alike in the common condemnation.

The conflagration of the town kept the besiegers so busy for some days that operations could not be carried forward against the castle on the rocky promontory beyond the town, whither the garrison had retired, until 8th September. On that day fire was opened upon it from 59 guns, to such effect that General Rey called together a council of war, which being unanimous for capitulation, the white flag was hung out at the moment before the Allies advanced to the assault. Sir Thomas Graham knew how to respect a gallant enemy who had maintained a defence for 73 days; he allowed the surviving garrison, 1200 in number, to march out with the honours of war, and the British officers saluted old General Rey at their head. These, of course, became prisoners of war; but 500 wounded men were sent into France. Surrender of the castle.

The bulk of the French forces had withdrawn after the actions of Sorauren to the camp of Urogne; but Soult was not the man to leave his brave comrade-in-arms Rey to his fate. Concentrating his troops opposite Vera on 30th August, he crossed the Bidassoa at daylight on the 31st, amid a heavy rain-storm, while Graham was preparing for the assault on Soult attempts to relieve San Sebastian.

* *Despatches*, xi. 166.

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ÆT. 44. the town. Simultaneously, the veteran Count Reille crossed the river above Biriatu with two divisions, covered by artillery which Soult had disposed along the heights flanking the fords. Guarding this passage were 18,000 Spaniards under General Freyre, strongly posted on the heights of San Marcial, and supported by a raw brigade of British recruits under Lord Aylmer and by Longa's division of Spaniards. The French advanced with all the *élan* which has made them so famous in warfare; but the Spaniards nobly made amends for their misconduct in former actions, and maintained a fierce hand-to-hand conflict. Nevertheless, the old habit was strong on General Freyre; he believed he was beaten long before there was the slightest reason for it, but he dared not yield the position under Wellington's all-pervading eye.

"I was sitting," said Wellington afterwards, in describing the events of the day, "upon a rock observing the affair with my glass, about four or five miles from the position upon the road, when a Spanish aide-de-camp came galloping to the rear and earnestly entreated I would direct the English division of General Cole, placed in reserve about a mile behind the Spanish position, to advance, for they were so hard pressed they could no longer answer for repelling the French attacks. It was curious that at this instant I observed the French commencing a retreat, and, desiring him to satisfy himself by my glass that such was really the fact, I strongly urged him to withdraw his request on the part of his General, and thus to enable him to claim the whole honour of the success without any aid from us. He looked through the glass, became in a moment as much elated as he had before been downcast, took my advice with thanks, and galloped off to be in time for his share of glory and boasting." *

Wellington was too generous—too glad, moreover, to be able to praise his Spanish allies—to make any mention of this little incident in his despatch. He gave Freyre and his men unstinted praise.

* *De Ros MS.*

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"The French were beat back, some of them even across the river, in the most gallant style by the Spanish troops, whose conduct was equal to that of any troops I have ever seen engaged, and the attack, having been frequently repeated, was upon every occasion defeated with the same gallantry and determination." * ANN. 1813.

While this affair was going on upon the left of the Allies, General Clausel, with three divisions of infantry, crossed the river higher up opposite Vera, and drove a Portuguese brigade and Inglis's brigade of the 7th Division off the heights before Lesaca. Inglis, however, retreated to a second range of heights, where he received reinforcements, and Clausel, fearing lest his columns should be compromised by Reille's defeat, withdrew across the Bidassoa in a fearful tempest of wind and rain.

Fighting also went on that day at Echellar, for Soult was earnest in his desire to release the beleaguered garrisons of San Sebastian and Pamplona; but here the French failed to make any impression on the 7th Division under Lord Dalhousie. That evening Soult heard of the capture of the town of San Sebastian, and, although the castle still held out, he had tested too well the quality of the fence of steel that bristled before him not to be aware that henceforward all his care must be for the defence of France itself.

The fighting on 31st August and 1st September, though distinguished by no historic battle name, cost the Allies the lives of 29 officers and 371 other soldiers, besides 2,223 wounded and missing, and this exclusive of those who fell at San Sebastian. By far the heaviest loss was sustained by the Spaniards, who bore the brunt of the combat, and bore it so well that for the first time since the battle of Baylen they vindicated a claim to the respectful consideration of the enemy. Soult admitted a loss of 3,600 of all ranks, including two Generals killed and three others wounded.

It has been suggested that Wellington ought to have

* *Despatches*, xi. 67.

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Æt. 44. directed his whole energy in these operations to turning the enemy's left and getting between him and Bayonne; and so no doubt he might, and would have done, had he considered it prudent at the time to carry the war into France. But many considerations weighed with him against what seemed to superficial critics at the time the natural corollary of his campaign against the French armies.* In the first place, there was the manifest difference between maintaining an army among a friendly population and one that was hostile. Then Pamplona still lay armed in his rear, and the presence of Suchet in Catalonia still held that access to Spain open, of which, if the Convention of Prague should result in turning the armistice into peace between Russia, Prussia and France, Napoleon might swiftly avail himself. It was not till 5th September that Wellington received intelligence that the Emperor of Austria, taking courage from the battle of Vitoria, had emerged from his prolonged vacillation, had thrown in his lot with the foes of his son-in-law, and that hostilities were to be resumed on 16th August. Even then Wellington felt no confidence in the management of great armies by a coalition of Sovereigns, against whom Napoleon had marshalled by his magic 400,000 fresh troops. Lastly, if he dreaded taking his own soldiers into a rich and hostile country, still deeper were his misgivings about the behaviour of the Spanish army. This force was becoming under his command a valuable auxiliary in battle; but the Spanish Government, distracted with internal intrigues and penetrated with the idea habitual to them that once an army was in the field it could feed itself, had neglected all means for its subsistence.

"I entreat your Excellency (the Minister of War at Cadiz) to request the Regency to consider in what a situation they place me, who am obliged to urge these brave soldiers to exertion, and to make them meet the enemy in the field, at the very moment that I know they are starving; and that, for want of proper

* *Despatches*, xi. 124.

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LIEUT.-GENERAL THE HON. SIR JOHN HOPE, K.B.,
AFTERWARDS 4TH EARL OF HOPETOUN, G.C.B.

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arrangements, there are no means of taking care of them when they are wounded." * ANN. 1813.

No movements of importance took place on either side for a month after the fall of San Sebastian. From opposite sides of the frontier, each army kept a vigilant eye on the other, diligently strengthening the positions; but the increasing cold and frequent storms exposed the allied troops to infinite discomfort in the mountain passes: they murmured at being restrained from an incursion on the fertile plains before them, and desertion—the one crime for which the soldier can expect no absolution—became terribly frequent.

These weeks, however, were no holiday-time for Wellington, as his despatches abundantly testify. Besides the constant strain of responsibility for 100,000 troops under his immediate command, and the frequent instructions he had to frame for the guidance of Bentinck's force in the south of Spain,† there were innumerable political questions—the constitution of the Spanish regency, the proposed restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France, and many other matters, on which his counsel was repeatedly invited by the British Cabinet; nor had he left Portugal so far behind him that he could neglect the course of events in that country. Marshal Beresford had been recalled to Lisbon to attend to matters vital to the existence of the Portuguese army; of the British Generals, Graham,‡ Picton, Leith, Dalhousie were going or had gone on leave to England; while Castaños and O'Donnel, the most experienced of the Spanish Generals, had resigned or been removed from their commands. Had he been left to carry out his own views, Wellington would have made Catalonia secure first, and then entered France, if he did so

* *Despatches*, xi. 73.

† *Ibid.*, xi. 31, et passim.

‡ When Sir Thomas Graham's failing health obliged him to leave the Peninsula a second time, he was replaced as next senior in command to Wellington by Sir John Hope (afterwards fourth Earl of Hopetoun). On being informed of this appointment, Wellington wrote to Bathurst: "I am quite certain he (Hope) is the ablest man in the army" (*Despatches*, xi. 143).

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Æt. 44. at all, from that quarter; but he yielded to the pressure of European opinion. Russia, Prussia, and Austria were eager for an immediate invasion of France.

"I see," wrote Wellington to Bathurst on 19th September, "that, as usual, the newspapers on all sides are raising the public expectation, and that the Allies are very anxious that we should enter France, and that our Government have promised that we should, *as soon as the enemy should be finally expelled from Spain*; and I think I ought, and will bend a little to the views of the Allies, if it can be done with safety to the army, notwithstanding that I acknowledge I should prefer to turn my attention to Catalonia." *

The enemy barred the way to Bayonne by a double line of entrenched positions. The left and right of the first line had for *appui* the precipitous mass of La Rhune, which towered above the town of Vera. Wellington designed to keep his right in its position, and, by throwing forward his left, force the passage of the lower Bidassoa and seize the entrenchments on La Rhune. This would enable him to gain the commodious harbour of Fuenterrabia, and dispense with the difficult one of Los Pasages, whence his supplies had been drawn up to this time. On 1st October he made an excursion to the posts about Roncesvalles, and by causing some movements of troops in that quarter, deceived Soult into expecting an attack from the allied right and centre. Then, returning to Irun on the 6th, when the tides suited the fords at the mouth of the Bidassoa, he told off the 1st and 5th Divisions in four columns under General Graham for the left attack through the tidal fords; General Freyre's Spaniards in three columns to cross by the Biriatu fords higher up; the Light Division and Longa's Spaniards to attack the Commissari heights behind Vera; and the Spanish army of Andalusia, under General Giron, to attempt La Rhune.

Passage of the Bidassoa.

All these troops were under arms before daylight on the

* *Despatches*, xi. 124.

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morning of 7th October. A thunderstorm, frequent precursor of bloody work in the Peninsula, had been raging all night; but the glare of lightning disclosed to the French no suspicious movements on the part of the Allies, for the tents were left standing. The 5th Division and Lord Aylmer's brigade crossed the sands unperceived; a rocket announced that they had crossed the low-water channel and stood on French soil, upon which the batteries on San Marcial bellowed forth, and the 1st Division followed their comrades. The French were surprised and driven from their works with the loss of eight guns, the 9th Regiment winning high praise under Colonel Cameron. Higher up the river, Freyre succeeded in turning the left of the French entrenchments at Biriatu. Their right flank was then turned by the 5th Division coming up from the coast, the whole of Reille's troops abandoned their positions, and made a disorderly retreat towards Bayonne. This part of the line, then, was forced with far less effort than could have been expected; indeed, had Soult not been perplexed by a false attack made that morning by the 6th Division on d'Erlon's position as far to the east as Ainhoué and Urdax,* and had he not been misled by Wellington's evolutions a few days before, he would surely have been more prompt to support his first line on the left. The Allies would then have been in a hazardous position, for the returning tide would have cut off their retreat. But in fact the skilful dispositions of their commander had ensured them the advantage of a surprise, and thus enabled them to carry a formidable position with a loss of not more than six hundred. ANN. 1813.

Attack on La Rhune.

The Light Division and Longa's Spanish corps fared as well in carrying the pass of Vera, for there also they came upon the enemy unawares. And now it remains only to tell of the doings of Giron's Andalusians, to whose lot it fell to attack the great *pièce de resistance*—La Rhune itself. They carried all before them, till they arrived at the foot of a cliff

* See Marshal Soult's intercepted report to the Duc de Feltre, *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 297.

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Æt. 44. on which stood a hermitage. Here, protected by entrenchments, Taupin's division defended themselves till nightfall. The following day the hill was shrouded in mist, but as soon as it cleared away, the brave Spaniards renewed the assault at 3 p.m. upon a different point of slightly easier access. This involved ejecting the enemy from the entrenched camp of Sarre, and here again he kept his assailants at bay till dark. When the sun rose on the third day there was not a Frenchman on the hill; the camp and hermitage had been evacuated in the night. Four officers killed and 40 wounded, 75 soldiers killed and 455 wounded, was the total loss of the Allies in two days' fighting, in which they carried a position of immense natural advantage, greatly strengthened with defensive works. The skill and forethought of their commander, the valour of his troops, and the dispirited condition of the enemy, all contributed a share to the success of these operations.

"Most people," Wellington told Lord de Ros, "consider that the carrying on of military operations in a mountainous country like the Pyrenees presents much greater difficulty than the plain. At first no doubt this is the case, but when once you become accustomed to it and acquainted with the general features of the country, I consider it easier to direct the movement of troops in mountains than in the plain country; one general rule which must be observed is to avoid small detachments such as could not maintain themselves in the valley when they might be exposed to attack." *

Wellington, fixing his headquarters at Vera, disposed his forces in three principal commands: the right, extending from Bastan to Roncesvalles, consisted of 26,000 men and 9 guns under Sir Rowland Hill; the centre, comprising Maya, Echellar, and La Rhune, was committed to Marshal Beresford with 36,000 men and 24 guns; and the left, stretching from the Mandale mountain to the sea, was held by Sir John Hope with 19,000 men and 54 guns. Had he deemed

* *De Ros MS.*

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it expedient to press his dispirited adversary at this time, Wellington might have done so at an advantage; but still the open door of Catalonia, the prolonged resistance of Pamplona, and the undeveloped course of events in Germany combined to make him pause. As October drew to a close, however, the reports from Pamplona showed that the garrison were in the last extremity. Deserters brought word that the whole place had been mined, and that the Governor intended to destroy it. In this Wellington perceived an intention to do injury to the Spanish nation, contrary to the laws of civilised war, and he sent strict orders to Don Carlos de España, who was conducting the blockade, that if this project were carried out, the Governor, all the officers and non-commissioned officers, and every tenth man of the garrison should be put to death.* It has been supposed that this was an empty menace, and that Wellington dared not carry it into execution. Be it remembered that the order to Don Carlos was explicit; that it was delivered on 20th October, when the Governor was treating for surrender, and that Don Carlos was not one to be squeamish about carrying it out to the letter. Happily, the threat proved enough; Pamplona was delivered unharmed into the hands of Don Carlos on 31st October. ANN. 1813.

In the meantime, news had come to hand of Napoleon's disasters at Grossbeeren (August 23rd), Katsbach (26th), Hagelburg (27th), Kulm (30th), Dennewitz (September 6th), and of the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine. Wellington, recognising in this the first occasion for dealing a fresh blow, issued orders to the allied army, calling upon all ranks to respect the persons and property of the inhabitants of France, to take nothing except on payment in full, and renewing the regulations for the action of Commissaries drawing supplies.† He also made proclamation to the French

* *Despatches*, xi. 211.

† On this matter Wellington, from the very earliest period of his service, laid extraordinary stress—extraordinary, because Continental and even some British Generals had not adopted as yet the humane code of warfare, even in a friendly

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Æt. 44. people, assuring them that it was his will that no injury should be done to them, provided they abstained from acts of war.

It is fair to contrast Wellington's principles, and the way he enforced their observance, with the conduct of Masséna. Wellington came to France as an enemy—as an invader; Masséna claimed Catalonia as part of French territory.

"When the army under my command entered the French territory there can be no doubt that, according to the modern practice and laws of war introduced by the French themselves, and invariably adhered to during their invasion of Spain and Portugal, I might have required the invaded country to supply all the wants of the army without any pay whatever. I thought proper to issue a proclamation . . . in which I promised protection to the inhabitants, and pointed out the mode in which they should obtain it, provided they *should remain in their houses, and not take any part in the operations of war.*" *

In acting thus, Wellington was following a good, though rather a distant, British precedent. In his severity towards soldiers guilty of plundering, he was but re-enacting the humane and politic conduct of Henry V. when he invaded France—echoing that King's indignation when Bardolph was caught plundering a French church.

"We would have all such offenders so cut off; and we give express charge that, in our marches through the country, there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid

country, still less in that of an enemy. Commenting in a letter to Lady Salisbury on the military operations in Canada in 1838, Wellington wrote: "I hear that the troops have behaved most shamefully—have plundered everybody, even their own officers and Generals! It is their own fault. You have read Gurwood (the Wellington despatches): so have they. What do you think of their ordering the men to take what they should think proper in the houses of the *habitans*, giving a receipt for the same? Observe—a soldier is to take (what he wants) and give a receipt! There is almost a volume of Gurwood on taking and giving receipts. Nobody is to take for himself or give a receipt, excepting the Commissary-General or those employed by him" (*Salisbury MSS.*).

* *Civil Despatches*, i. 58.

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for; none of the French upbraided, or abused in disdainful language. For when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner." * ANN. 1813.

Soult now occupied a front of about twelve miles, extending from Ainhoué across the Nivelle to the sea, covering Saint-Jean-de-Luz, and strengthened by a double line of entrenchments and numerous redoubts. His position was undoubtedly stronger, because more concentrated, than when he held the lower Bidassoa; but his inaction displeased the Emperor, who, on 14th October, made the Duc de Feltre reproach him on that account. Soult fully shared the Emperor's opinion that to act on the offensive suited his troops better than on the defensive; he had repeatedly urged Suchet to move out of Catalonia and unite forces with him in Aragon; but that Marshal, with 50,000 or 60,000 men, continued to potter on against Bentinck's, and afterwards Clinton's, ineffective operations, until an early snowfall rendered such a combination impossible by blocking the passes of the eastern Pyrenees. Soult, accordingly, remained stiffly on the defensive, anxious because of want of money and forage—above all, because of the dispiriting effect of repeated defeats on his troops.

"A general action," he wrote on 19th October to the Duc de Feltre, "will certainly take place. . . . On my part I am doing all in my power to be able to receive the enemy. . . . Every arm of the service is severely crippled for want of funds, and we are threatened with excessive desertion. I cannot conceal from you that the situation is very embarrassing." †

The French army corresponded to that of the Allies in being thrown into three principal commands. Reille, facing Hope, commanded on the right, along the heights of Urrogne to the sea; Clausel held the centre, against Beresford, between

* *Henry V.*, act iii. sc. 6. Shakespeare here repeats some of the exact phrases in King Henry's order as rendered by Froissart.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 298.

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Æt. 44. Ascain and Amotz; while d'Erlon's position around Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port continued unchanged in front of Hill. Villatte's division was in reserve at Saint-Jean-de-Luz.

The contemplated advance of the Allies was delayed till the first week in November, first by deep snow, then by the storms and rain which swept it away, and, lastly, by the total failure of supplies to the Spanish troops, which caused Freyre to announce that he must return to his own country. The last difficulty was got round by Wellington ordering 40,000 rations of flour from his own magazines into the Spanish lines, and, in the small hours between 9th and 10th November, the whole of the forces stood to arms, moved by moonlight out of the passes down the northern slopes of the Pyrenees, and lay down on the line of the foremost outpickets to wait for daylight. Seventy-four thousand strong was the allied line of battle that morning, with 95 cannon, to attack strongly fortified positions defended by 60,000 Frenchmen.

Battle of the Nivelle.

The right of Soult's line was the strongest, where Reille held command; Wellington, therefore, designed to turn it by wheeling forward the right and centre of his army, and forcing the French left and centre from their defences. At daybreak on a serene morning the echoes reverberated to the reports of three guns fired from the summit of Atchubia. This was the preconcerted signal: the allied troops sprang to their feet; the French hurried to their posts of defence, and the sun rose upon a conflict raging along a battle front of eight miles. An impression was first made on Clausel's position in the centre, where the brigades of the Light Division and Longa's Spaniards, echeloned by the left, flung themselves in succession against the stone forts and entrenchments with which the French had scarred the lesser Rhune. In wonderfully short space of time they cleared the hill, though not without loss; among many others General Kempt of the Rifle Brigade fell wounded in the assault on the Star fort. To the right of the Light Division stood two redoubts,

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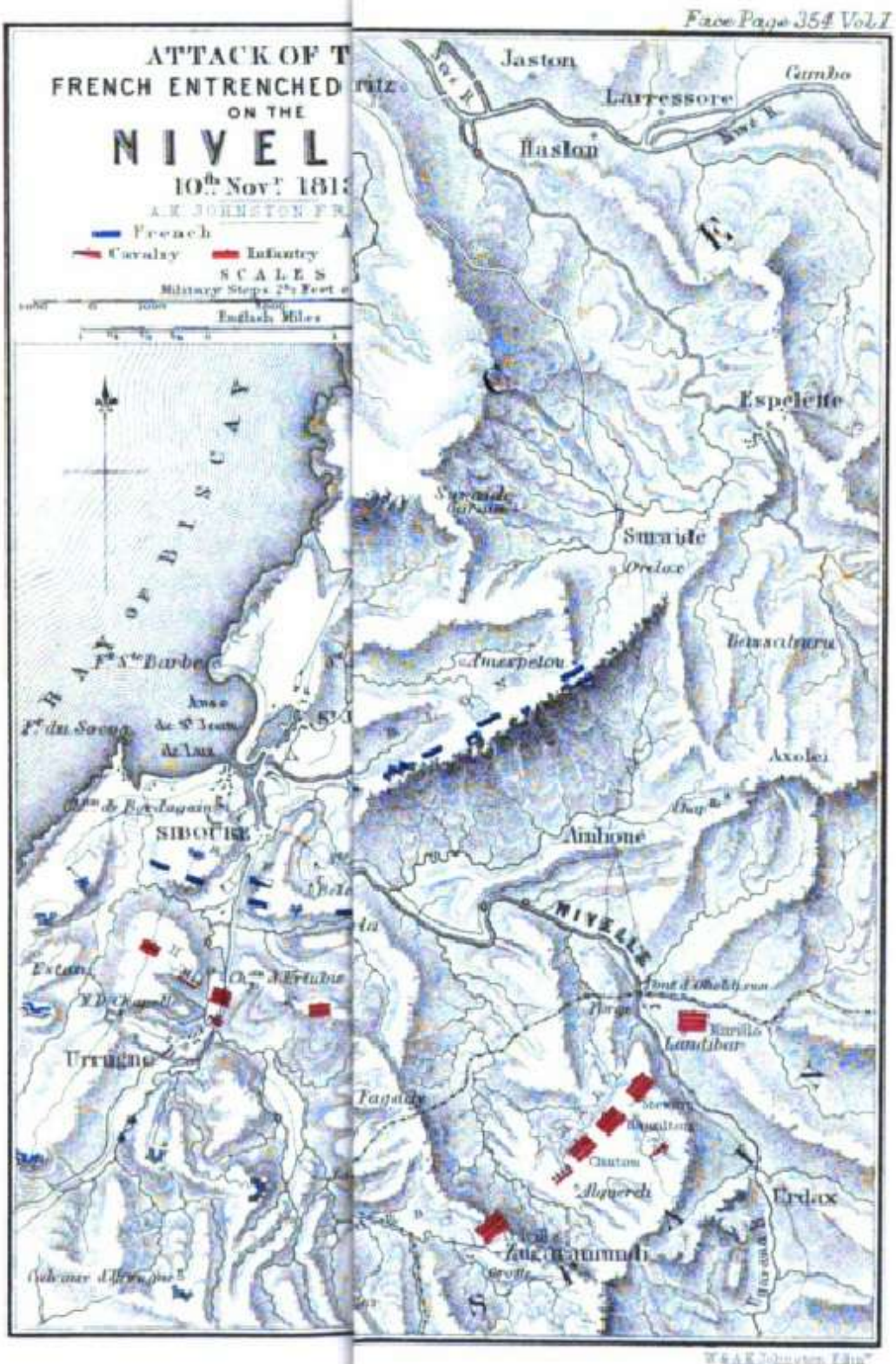

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protecting the approaches to the village of Sarre. Sir Lowry Cole having cannonaded these to such purpose that the troops holding them evacuated in double time, the 3rd Division turned the left of the village, Giron's Andalusians the right, while the 4th Division, which had already won for itself a name nothing second in lustre to that of the Light Division, attacked it in front and carried it. Next, the 3rd, 4th, 7th and Light Divisions, with the Andalusians, combined in a grand attack on the enemy's position behind the village; the 3rd and 7th Divisions capturing the redoubts on the left of the French centre, the Light Division those on the right; while the 4th Division and the Andalusians, attacking in front, drove the enemy out of the whole of their defences, taking prisoners the entire 1st battalion of the 88th French regiment in one of the redoubts. ANN. 1813.

While this combat was in progress, Wellington was with Sir Rowland Hill far on the right, superintending the movements of the 6th Division under Sir H. Clinton, which, supported by Hamilton's Portuguese Division, crossed the Nivelle, and stormed the enemy's entrenchments and a redoubt behind Ainhoué. Further again to the right Sir William Stewart carried all before him, driving the French out of their entrenchments, and establishing himself with the 2nd Division upon the heights behind Ainhoué.

On the far left of the allied line, Sir John Hope, as directing the pivot on which the grand change of front moved, had but a false attack assigned to him; nevertheless, he, too, prevailed, driving in the French outposts on the lower Nivelle, capturing a redoubt above Urrogne, and establishing himself in a commanding position on the heights. All this was effected by eight o'clock in the morning, and, during the pause which ensued after the first line of defence had been carried, from his post on the little Rhune Wellington could survey the working of the vast engine he had set in motion—a magnificent panorama of war, from Collier's squadron in the bay, standing to and off under all plain sail,

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Æt. 44. exchanging shots with the fort of Socoa, to the heights behind Ainhoué, where the morning rays sparkled on the victorious bayonets of Hill.

There remained still intact the second line of Soult's defences, to which his beaten troops now retired, some in good order, others broken and pell-mell. Wellington sent the 3rd and 7th Divisions forward along the left bank of the Nivelle, the 6th Division along the right bank, against the fortified heights of Saint Pé. They arrived in time to intercept Clausel's divisions in an attempt to gain this stronghold; they attacked Maransin's division on the heights, and, when darkness fell on the scene at five o'clock, they remained masters of this position also, established well in rear of Soult's right. It is impossible in a few feeble paragraphs to do justice to the manner in which the three Generals—Hope, Beresford, and Hill—carried out the grand scheme of their puissant chief on this memorable field. Not an error seems to have been made in any detail; the several columns on an extended front, with varying distances to traverse, performed their allotted work at the appointed times, and a position naturally of peculiar strength, which the enemy had spent many industrious weeks in fortifying, was carried with a total loss to the Allies of 343 killed and 2,351 wounded. Fifteen hundred prisoners and fifty guns were taken from the enemy, who retired in the night along his whole line.

What spell had been cast on these once invincible soldiers that they contested a grand position so feebly? Soult was out-generalled—true—but where were those redoubtable warriors of Vimeiro, of Busaco, of Fuentes d'Oñoro? Many of them were on the heights of the Nivelle that day, no doubt; but the secret of their altered carriage in battle was not revealed till the battle was over. In the redoubt where the 88th French regiment was captured, a copy of the Imperial Gazette was found, containing the momentous news of the Emperor's total defeat at Leipsig. Lord Wellington, naturally anxious to hear the latest intelligence, directed one

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of his staff to put some questions to the chief officers of the 88th; but they would communicate nothing, sullenly declaring that they had done their own duty and knew nothing about what was going on elsewhere. ANN. 1813.

"On hearing this," Wellington told Lord de Ros, "I directed they should be left alone; but I sent them an invitation to dine with me, which they accepted readily. I warned my staff to ask them no questions, but to see that they were well supplied with Madeira. Gradually they became in excellent humour and far more communicative. Watching my opportunity, I turned in an offhand manner to the commanding officer and said—

"'Où etait le quartier-général de l'Empereur d'après les dernières nouvelles?'

"'Monseigneur,' he replied, 'il n'y a plus de quartier-général.'

"'Comment plus de quartier-général?'

"'Monseigneur, il n'y a ni quartier-général, ni armée française: l'affaire est finie!'

"Then he went on to tell me of the battle of Hanau, of the Emperor being driven over the Rhine, and the army totally dissolved. The effect of this announcement on twenty or thirty of the principal officers of the English army round that table, may be imagined but not described."*

* *De Ros MS.* This incident is referred to also in Lord Wellington's letter to Sir John Hope on the day after the battle (*Despatches*, xi. 275).

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CHAPTER XIV.

SOUTH OF FRANCE.

1813–1814.

Dec. 10, 1813	Passage of the Nive.
„ 13	Battle of Saint Pierre. The Allies go into winter quarters.
Feb. 14, 1814	Resumption of the invasion.
„ 23 and 24	Passage of the Adour.
„ 27	Battle of Orthes. Wellington wounded.
March 12	The Allies enter Bordeaux.
„ 13	Soult resumes the offensive.
March 14	And again retires.
„ 19	Affair of Vic Bigorre.
„ 20	Affair of Tarbes.
April 6 and 11	Abdication of Napoleon.
„ 10	Battle of Toulouse.
„ 12	Soult evacuates Toulouse.
„ 14	Sortie from Bayonne. Close of the Peninsular Campaign.

"MONSEIGNEUR, l'affaire est finie!"

The words of the French colonel at Wellington's dinner-table on 10th November, though not literally applicable to the task of the Allies in the south of France, were not far from fulfilment even there; and what remains to be told must be done in few words.

After the battle of the Nivelle, the Allies went into cantonments, while Soult established himself in an entrenched camp round Bayonne. The Spanish troops, maintained barely above starving-point by their wretched commissariat, and not unnaturally inclined to retaliate on the French people for the robbery and violence they had suffered during five years French occupation, broke all restraint, and plundered so

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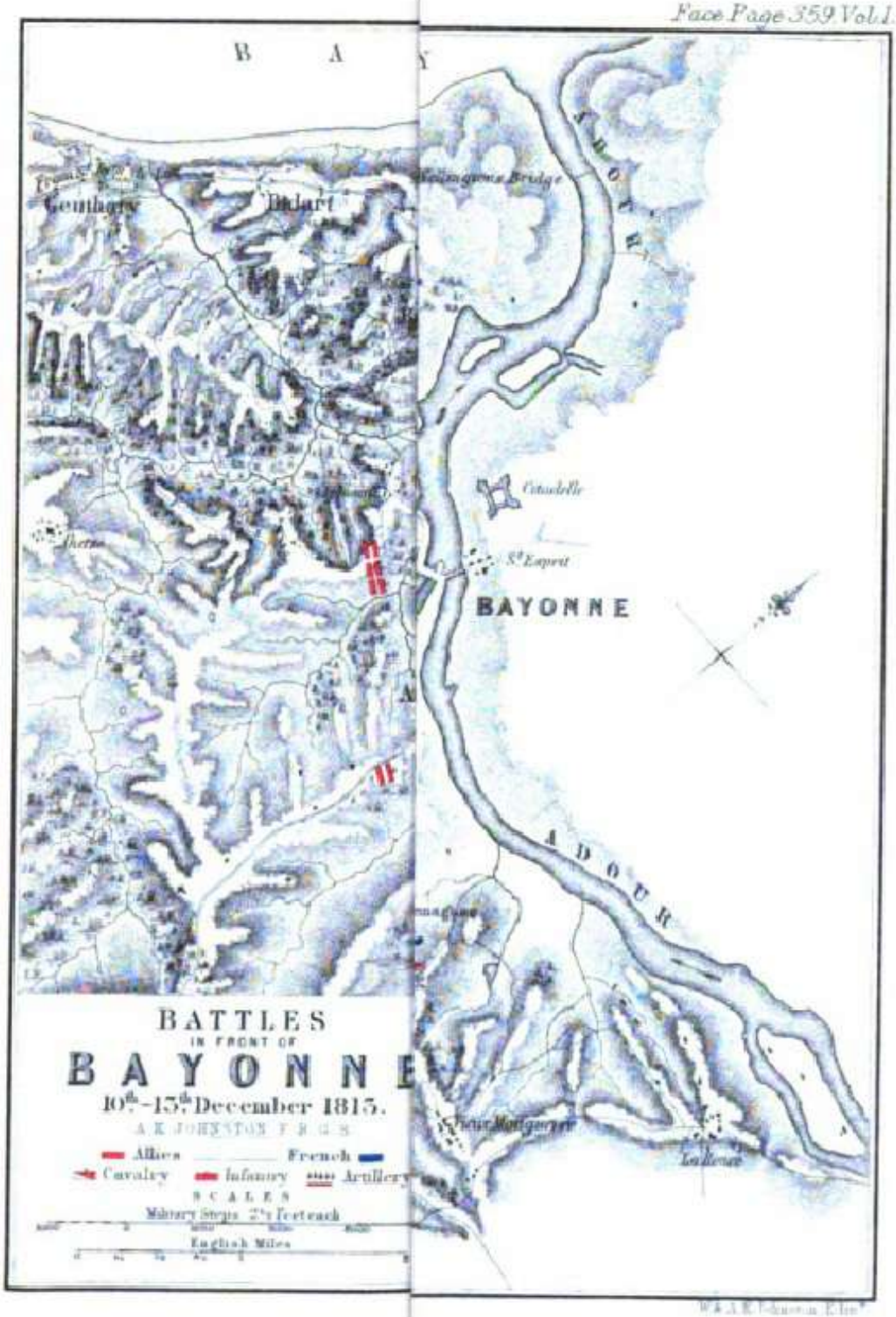

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badly, that Wellington sent all of them, except Morillo's division, across the frontier to be stationed in their own country.* Where does military history afford another instance of a General denuding himself, in the presence and within the territory of his enemy, of a large portion of his troops (and the Spaniards lately had developed into a valuable fighting force), in order to prevent the resident population suffering from their presence? It is an instance of Wellington's scrupulous sense of justice and humanity; nevertheless, disinterested though his motives were, his action brought its own reward. The French peasantry crowded into the allied lines, bringing their cattle and goods with them for protection from their own countrymen; they supplied provisions and information, and turned Legitimist almost to a man. As for the conduct of British and Portuguese soldiers, Wellington was at last able to report to the Secretary of State that "it has been exactly what I wished." † ANN. 1813.

A glance at the map will show that the Allies occupied a much contracted position between the sea on their left, the Nivelle in their rear, and the Nive, which joins the Adour at Bayonne, in their front. For this reason, and also in order to cut Soult's communication with Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, Wellington decided to clear the tract between the Nive and Adour, and sent the pontoon train to Arauntz for that purpose on the evening of 8th December. At daybreak on the 9th, Sir John Hope advanced in three columns from Saint-Jean-de-Luz, the French retiring before him covered by skirmishers, and entering the entrenchments round Bayonne.

Passage of the Nive.

The French had broken both bridges at Ustaritz, but Beresford held the island between them, and the 6th Division, passing over by means of pontoons, drove d'Armaignac's brigade before them into the marshes. Simultaneously Hill forded the river in three columns above and below Cambo, though the current was so deep and strong that several of the cavalry were drowned. Opposed to him was General

* *Despatches*, xi. 304. † *Ibid.*, xi. 303.

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ÆT. 44. Foy, who beat a rapid retreat with his left wing, leaving his right under General Berlier unsupported at Halzou. On the approach of the 6th Division Berlier, too, retired, and Soult, coming up from Bayonne shortly after midday, formed line of battle across the high-road, having his right behind Villefranque. This village was taken by Portuguese and British light infantry battalions, but they were not strong enough to do more. The roads had been so much destroyed by the rains, that it was nearly dark before Hill's corps came up, and each side remained at night in possession of its own ground. Before morning on 10th December the French withdrew into the entrenchments of Bayonne, and Hill occupied the position designed for him, with his right towards the Adour and his left at Villefranque, communicating with Beresford on the left bank of the Nive by a bridge of pontoons. The easy passage of the Nive tempted Wellington, or at least his Generals, to relax their vigilance, and Soult's sudden counterstroke found the Allies somewhat short of prepared. Seeing his enemy divided by the Nive, the French Marshal placed the garrison of Bayonne, 8,000 strong, in the entrenchments of Mousserolles, between the rivers in front of Hill, and moving out with a force of 60,000, fell with extraordinary violence upon Sir John Hope's position at Barroilhet and Arcangues. Wellington was not in this part of the position, but had crossed the Nive, expecting that Hill would have hot work in the position of Villefranque. Hope's brigades were widely scattered, and but for the splendid behaviour of Campbell's Portuguese brigade on the left, which held the plateau of Barroilhet against General Reille's division till time was given to Robinson's brigade of the 5th Division to come to their support, the surprise would have been successful. While this critical state of affairs existed on the left, Clausel was engaged with the 5th and Light Divisions about two miles to the right; and here, also, owing to the scattered condition of the troops, the chances were all in favour of the heavy columns. But the Light Division held

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the village and church of Arcangues stubbornly, till, in the afternoon, the 3rd, 4th, and 7th Divisions came in view on their right, labouring knee and ankle deep through the mire, while in another direction the Guards appeared coming up from Saint-Jean-de-Luz. This made Soult pause, and while he was making fresh dispositions, the winter's day drew to a close. ANN. 1813.

The French Marshal had come nearer success than on any former enterprise against the Allies, but chagrin from a new source lay in wait for him. Three German battalions in the French service, being the regiments of Nassau and Frankfort, marched into the British lines, having received orders from their prince to change sides, as he had done himself.* Retaining the positions whence they had driven the pickets of the Allies on the 10th, the French renewed their attack on Sir John Hope on the 11th and 12th, but were repulsed and withdrew into the camp of Bayonne.

Soult, however, was an adroit and desperate fighter at bay. On the night of the 12th he passed 35,000 men swiftly through Bayonne, and on the morning of the 13th attacked Sir Rowland Hill between the rivers. Wellington, divining his intention, had ordered the 4th and 6th Divisions and two brigades of the 3rd to reinforce Hill; but Hill with 14,000 men had repulsed the attack, won the pitched battle of Saint Pierre, and driven the enemy back into their entrenchments before these troops could take part in the combat. Battle of Saint Pierre.

The casualties among the Allies in the severe fighting between 9th and 13th December were very heavy—upwards of 5,000—including 32 officers and 618 soldiers killed and five Generals wounded.

Napoleon was now in urgent need of all the troops he could collect. Suchet's army in Catalonia would be useful to him; therefore, making a grace of necessity, he offered to Napoleon's treaty with Ferdinand VII.

* Other German regiments, with Suchet in Catalonia, would have done the same, had not the Marshal, by command of the Emperor, anticipated them by making them lay down their arms.

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Æt. 44. restore Ferdinand VII., whom he had held captive for five years, to the throne of Spain, and to execute a treaty, under which both French and British troops should evacuate the Peninsula. To the credit of the Spanish Cortes, they refused the snare. While expressing their joy at the restoration of their royal house, they adhered to a wise decree they had passed, prohibiting recognition of any public act of their King so long as he was a prisoner.

The Allies go into winter quarters.

After Soult's defeat at Saint Pierre, the hostile armies lay in their cantonments, the Allies occupying a position from the coast at Bidart on the left to Arcangues, whence their right was thrown back to Urcuray, covering the road to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, Wellington's headquarters being at Saint-Jean-de-Luz. He received there a distinguished volunteer in the person of His Royal Highness the Duc d'Angoulême, and was obliged to tell him very plainly that, in the absence of instructions from his own Government, he could not recognise the head of his house as Louis XVIII., as the Royalist party in France were burning to proclaim him.*

The right of the French army under Reille remained in the camp of Bayonne; Drouet commanded the centre, on the right bank of the Adour, and Clausel the left, on the right bank of the Bidouse, a tributary of the Adour from the south. The season was unusually inclement and stormy; occasional affairs of outposts and skirmishes of greater importance took place; but, as usual in periods of general inaction, the soldiers of both armies fraternised, and, according to their simple code of chivalry, used to warn each other's sentries off their posts when an advance was about to be made on either side. Wellington's stern repression of plunder, in spite of occasional excesses on the part of Morillo's Spaniards, had so conciliated the good-will of the Basque peasantry as to intensify the manifold difficulties of Soult's position. Nevertheless, and although his army was weakened by the Emperor withdrawing two of his divisions in February, this good soldier

* *Despatches*, xi. 608.

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never flinched in his task of stemming the tide of invasion. He had with his eagles but 40,000 men, whereas Wellington could now place 100,000 British, Portuguese, and Spaniards in line of battle. ANN. 1814.

Active operations were resumed on St. Valentine's Day, 1814, when Sir Rowland Hill began several consecutive days' fighting, driving General Harispe from Hellette to Saint Palais and Garris; thence through the strong country and across the Gave d'Oleron* at Sauveterre. Mina's Spaniards remained behind to blockade Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. On Hill's left, Beresford engaged the French divisions at Hastingues on the 23rd February, and Soult began a concentration on the right bank of the Pau at Orthes. This was exactly according to Wellington's design; he wished to divert the enemy's attention from Sir John Hope, whom he had instructed to force the passage of the Adour between Bayonne and the sea. Continuous stormy weather having delayed the arrival off the bar of Admiral Penrose's squadron, Hope began operations on the 23rd without waiting for him, by driving in the French outposts, and beginning a bridge of rafts and pontoons. Soult, with his whole attention occupied in manœuvring his centre and left, was wholly unprepared for any movement below the town, where the natural difficulties of a stormy estuary, strong tides, deep sand, and marshy shores seemed effective obstacles to the passage of an army. He ought to have remembered certain events on the Douro at Oporto. On the evening of the 23rd a detachment of Guards and Rifles effected a lodgment on the north bank, and were immediately attacked by a couple of French battalions. The use of the novel Congreve rockets employed here for the first time with effect,† was too much for the nerves of these

Resumption of the campaign.

Passage of the Adour.

* *Gave*; the Basque term for a rapid river.

† Wellington, when this invention was first brought under his notice, failed to see any advantage in it. "I don't want to set fire to any town, and I don't know any other use of the rockets;" but he soon changed his opinion about them, and the rocket brigade proved of great effect upon troops inured to round shot and shell.

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ÆT. 44. gentlemen, who soon desisted, and withdrew into the town. On the 24th a third of the infantry had passed safely over the crazy bridge, under cover of artillery. Next day the squadron arrived off the river mouth, and the blue-jackets set to work with a will. Protected by gunboats, they towed bridge-barges across the dangerous bar, and by nightfall on 26th February a strong bridge was ready for the passage of artillery and baggage.

The important position of Bayonne being thus turned, and a route provided for the passage of supplies easier than the rough one across the Gaves, Wellington prepared for further advance into France by bringing Freyre's Spaniards over the frontier again. He had returned on the 21st to the Gaves, to give his attention to Soult's position at Orthes, where the French were 40,000 strong, with 40 guns. Their left, under Harispe, rested on the town of Orthes; the right, commanded by Reille, rested on a bold hill behind the village of Saint Boës; while d'Erlon's divisions formed the centre, retired from the flanks by the course of a line of flat-topped hills, partly heath, partly woodland, on which they lay. The centre and right were protected by extensive swamps, and the flanks reposed on ground of extraordinary strength.

Battle of Orthes.

Beresford's corps now took the place of Hope's as the left wing of the army, and, crossing the Gave de Pau without opposition on the morning of the 26th below Peyrehorade, marched up the right bank upon Orthes. The 3rd Division under Picton, and Cotton's cavalry, crossed higher up at Bereux, while Hill advanced straight on the bridge of Orthes. This, however, was strongly defended, and mined also; therefore Hill, keeping the 2nd Division on the left bank, sent the 6th and Light Divisions over by a pontoon bridge at daylight on the 27th to form the right of the attack. For more than an hour on that morning Wellington scanned his enemy's position from an abrupt hill, which, crowned by an ancient Roman camp, rose opposite, and nearly equal in height to, the centre of Soult's position. At nine o'clock he directed

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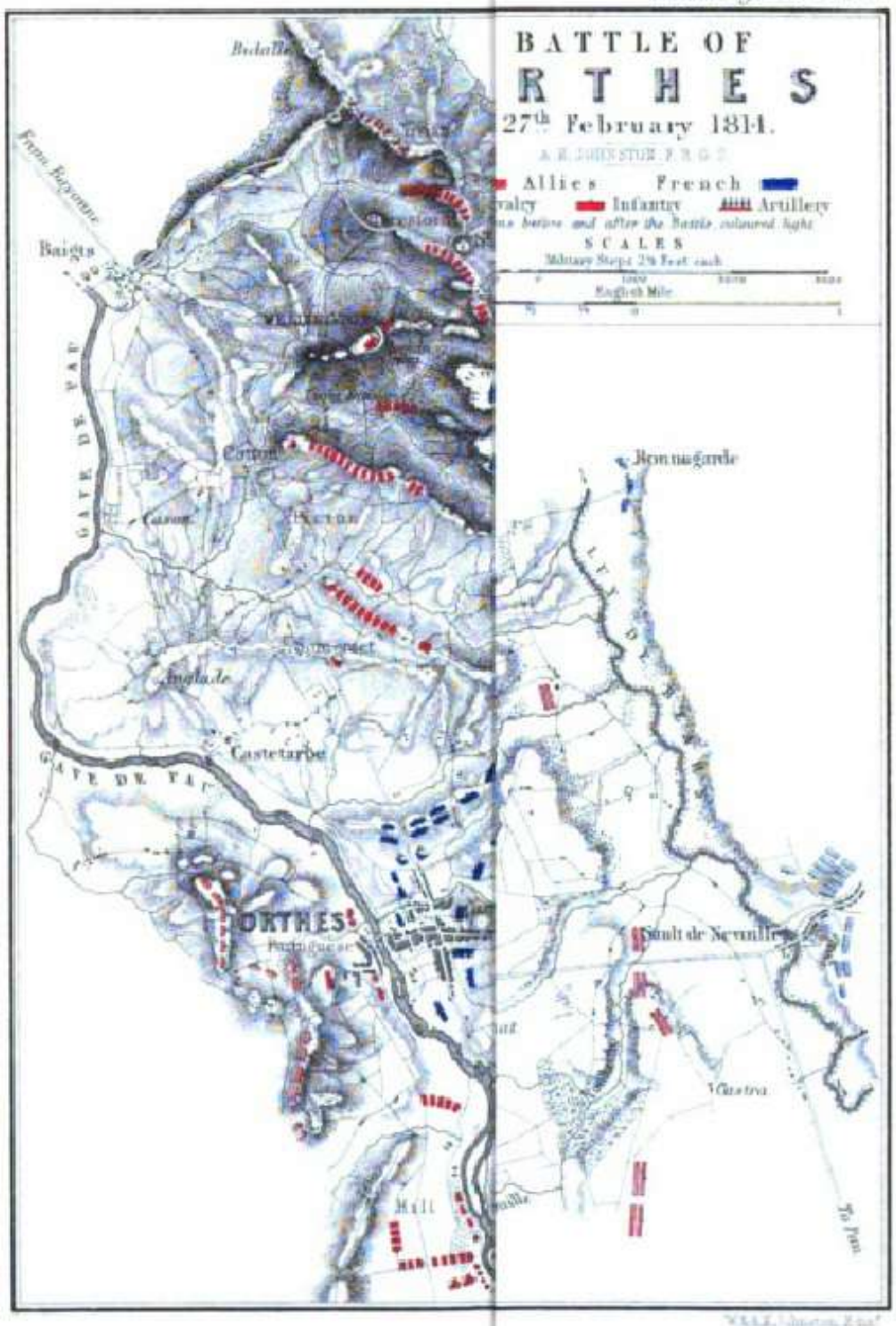

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Beresford to advance with the 4th Division under Sir Lowry Cole, the 7th under General Walker, and Vivian's brigade of cavalry, in order to turn the enemy's left at Saint Boës; while the 3rd and 6th Divisions under Sir H. Clinton, with Lord Edward Somerset's cavalry brigade, moved along the high-road against the centre and left. These two columns being a mile and a half apart, Wellington extended the Light Division to connect them behind the hill on which he sat. Sir Rowland Hill had instructions to move the 2nd Division up the left bank of the river and cross a couple of miles behind the enemy's position. ANN. 1814.

The 4th Division carried the village of St. Boës after some heavy fighting; but the general plan of attack had thereafter to be modified, because of the failure of the assault on the hill behind Saint Boës. The only approach to this was along a ridge, swept with artillery and too narrow for the columns to deploy. Repeatedly the 4th Division were repulsed with terrible carnage; some of the regiments lost all semblance of order; the line was shattered at its most vital point. A detachment from Picton's division met with a reverse at the same time, and already Soult had set his reserves in motion to clinch the victory which seemed to be his, when a brigade of the Light Division, brought up from the reserve, altered the whole aspect of the field. Flinging this upon the inner face of the hill behind Saint Boës, the key of Soult's strength, Wellington inclined the 3rd Division to their left to support it. The approach on this side was through a marsh, waist-deep; but it wanted more than that to damp the fiery activity of the 52nd. At the head of the brigade, this noble regiment forced its way through the mire, up the acclivity beyond to its very crest, where they fixed their hold and kept it, till the 3rd Division came up to confirm the advantage. The 4th Division returned to the conflict along the fatal ridge to the left; the 6th Division attacked the heights to the right of Saint Boës, and soon the conquering cheer rang out in the intervals of a cannonade which had been opened on the

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Æt. 44. yielding masses from a commanding eminence. At first the retrograde movement was slow and orderly; taking up one position after another, the French divisions dealt death among their assailants; but there was a lion in the path of their retreat. Hill, who had forced the passage of the Gave above Orthes, had drawn up the 2nd Division, 13,000 strong, across the road to Pau, and so menacing was his aspect that the dark columns of the French began to melt at the edges, then whole detachments broke off, until the stately array was lost in scurrying, scattered blotches and streaks. On their rear rode Edward Somerset's hussars, sabring and slaying, till the pursuit stopped at dusk at the Luy de Béarn, a stream which Soult crossed and destroyed the bridge behind him, continuing his retreat to Saint Sever on the Adour.

Lord Wellington wounded.

Lord Wellington was disabled from conducting the pursuit. During the attack on Saint Boës he had dismounted and was standing with Alava when a Portuguese soldier limped to the rear, explaining as he passed that he was *ofendido* (wounded). Wellington was laughing at the expression when a grape or musket shot struck the hilt of his sword, driving it violently against his hip. He fell to the ground, but rose to his feet immediately, smiling and saying, "By God! I am *ofendido* this time." This was the only wound he ever received in all his many engagements; he was able to remount and ride slowly, but not to leap enclosures as it was his custom to do.* Eighteen officers and 259 soldiers were killed; 134 officers and 1,858 soldiers were wounded and missing in the allied army. Out of Soult's force of 40,000, not less than 7,000 were killed, wounded, and taken; notwithstanding which, and the total loss of his position, the high-spirited Marshal issued a proclamation claiming the battle as a moral victory for the Imperial arms. Next morning his injured limb

* He was struck on two other occasions, in the attack on the tope of Sultanpettah and at Salamanca; but never wounded except at Orthes. When asked what was the difference between being struck and wounded, he replied, "Struck is from a spent ball, which may often be able to knock a man over, and yet do him no other injury" (*Stanhope*, 184).

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was so stiff and painful that Wellington feared lest he should be unable to follow up his victory in person. Forcing himself, however, to his feet, he hobbled across the street to the quarters of Lord March, who had been dangerously, it was feared fatally, wounded, and, having assured that young officer that the enemy were in full retreat, he managed to scramble into the saddle and put his forces in motion. Still hoping for support from Suchet, Soult directed his retreat up the Adour to Tarbes, thus leaving open the road to Bordeaux, where a strong royalist reaction invited the attention of the Allies. Wellington, having called up Spanish reinforcements from the frontier, felt strong enough to take advantage of this opening. Having followed Soult as far as Saint Sever, he detached the 4th and 7th Divisions under Marshal Beresford to enter Bordeaux, where the British were received with acclamation, the mayor publicly stripping off his tricolor scarf and donning the white cockade of the Bourbons.

ANN. 1814.

The Allies enter Bordeaux.

Restoration, however, was no avowed part of the programme of the allied Sovereigns. On crossing the Rhine on 1st January they had proclaimed their intention to secure peace to Europe, guaranteeing to France the integrity of her ancient dominions, but offering no explicit menace to the rule of Napoleon within them. Wellington, therefore, only conformed to the instructions of Lord Liverpool's Cabinet in refusing to recognise Louis as King of France, although the whole country round him in the south resounded with the ancient cry of *Vive le roi!* Nevertheless, perhaps overrating local symptoms of loyalty to the Bourbons as significant of the sentiment of the whole nation—a nation which, more than any other, is voiced by its capital—he urged upon Lord Liverpool the expediency of declaring for the old dynasty.

"Any declaration from us would, I am convinced, raise such a flame in the country as would soon spread from one end of it to the other, and would infallibly overturn Buonaparte. I cannot discover the policy of not hitting one's enemy as hard as one can,

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ÆT. 44. and in the most vulnerable place. I am certain that he would not so act by us, if he had the opportunity. He would certainly overturn the British authority in Ireland if it was in his power." *

Such being Lord Wellington's private views, it illustrates his conception of duty to note that, in carrying out the policy of the ministers he served, he was not content to fulfil the letter of his instructions, but acted consistently with their spirit also. Contrary to Wellington's injunctions, Louis "the Desired" had been proclaimed King at Bordeaux amid great rejoicings; the Legitimists fretted at the cold neutrality of the British commander; d'Angoulême waxed importunate for funds and the assistance of armed force. Wellington replied inflexibly—

"I beg your Royal Highness to tell . . . all such persons that no power on earth shall induce me to depart from what I conceive to be my duty towards the Sovereigns whom I am serving; and that I will not risk even a company of infantry to save properties and families placed in a state of danger contrary to my advice and opinion. . . . It will be very disagreeable to me to take any step which shall mark more strongly a want of understanding between your Royal Highness and me; but I cannot allow the honour and character of the allied Sovereigns, or my own, to be doubted even for a moment. . . . It is not in my power, under existing circumstances, to make your Royal Highness the advance of money you require." †

Plain speaking, this, and a good deal more in the same letter. It is not given to every man to detach so cleanly his line of duty from that to which private opinion and sympathy inclines him.

Soult resumes the offensive and again retires.

No sooner did Soult perceive that the Allies had been weakened by the detachment of Beresford than, with admirable constancy, he turned to threaten battle once more. He advanced on 13th March from Lembèye to Conchez,

* *Despatches*, xi. 547. † *Ibid.*, xi. 584.

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and prepared to attack Hill in his position between Aire and Garlin; but on Wellington moving two divisions to strengthen his right wing, the French retired again. Marshal Beresford, with the 4th Division and Vivian's cavalry, were recalled from Bordeaux, and a general advance of the Allies took place on the 18th. On the 19th there was a sharp encounter between the 3rd Division and the French rear-guard at Vic Bigorre, which cost the British the life of one of their most able engineer officers, Colonel Sturgeon. ANN. 1814.

Affair of Tarbes.

Again, on the 20th, a partial engagement took place at Tarbes, where Sir Rowland Hill attacked the town and bridge, while Clinton flanked the enemy's right, and the Light Division, storming the heights of Orleix, forced back his centre. Night interrupted the conflict and prevented it becoming general: on the morrow Soult's army was far on the road to Saint Gaudens, thirty miles from Tarbes, where he halted on the night of the 21st. Hardly had he begun his march on the 22nd before Fane's cavalry came up, and two squadrons of the 13th Light Dragoons scattered four of French cavalry, taking a hundred prisoners. On the 24th Soult entered Toulouse, having retarded the pursuit by blowing up every bridge behind him. The Allies reached the left bank of the Garonne, opposite Toulouse, on 27th March, and proceeded to reconnoitre its defences. These were formidable enough. The town stood within its ancient walls at the junction of the Languedoc canal with the Garonne; the canal covered the eastern and northern faces; the deep and rapid river, swollen by excessive rains, the western one. On the south was the fortified suburb of Saint Michel, and on the western bank of the Garonne, between the Allies and the stone bridge, stood the Faubourg Saint Cyprien, also fortified and strengthened by recent entrenchments, with an effective *tête de pont*. Soult, however, mistrusted the main defences of the place, which were antiquated even according to the engineering science of that day. He preferred a range of heights to the east of the town, between the canal and the

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Æt. 44.

river Ers; and here, leaving a strong garrison in Saint Cyprien, he took up his position, increasing its natural strength by five redoubts connected by lines of entrenchment.

On 28th March Wellington attempted, but in vain, to throw his pontoons across the Garonne at Portel, not far above the town; the strength of the flood-water was too great. Desirous to gain access to the south aspect of Toulouse, both because it was least strongly defended, and because it would interrupt any co-operative movement by Suchet, he renewed the attempt higher up the river on the 31st, and this time Hill's corps succeeded in reaching the other side. But the reason for Soult's apparent neglect of this approach was now revealed: the roads and country to the south of Toulouse had been rendered by the rain absolutely impassable by artillery: Hill had to return again to the left bank.

The pontoons were next taken to a point below the town, where, on 4th April, Beresford effected a crossing with the 3rd, 4th, and 6th Divisions and three brigades of cavalry. No sooner was he established there than the garrison made a skilful attempt to break the bridge. Having loaded a huge barge with stones, they sent it down the current, while Wellington and his staff looked on anxiously without the possibility of averting the disaster they saw impending. The French, however, had overdone the thing: they had overloaded the barge, so that when it struck the bridge it reeled and sank, without doing any mischief.* But what man failed to effect, nature did for him. Two days later a sudden snow flood sent the pontoons flying, and Beresford's force of 18,000 men was left exposed for forty-eight hours to the immensely superior numbers of the enemy.† Strange to say, Soult neglected this, the best opportunity he ever had of inflicting defeat on his enemy. Hugging his stronghold on

* *De Ros MS.*

† "In this awkward situation, when the army was divided, I used to cross over every morning to the other side (where Beresford lay) and return at night. I thought the troops might be out of spirits at seeing themselves in a position so exposed; but not a bit—they didn't mind it at all" (*Salisbury MSS.*, 1835).

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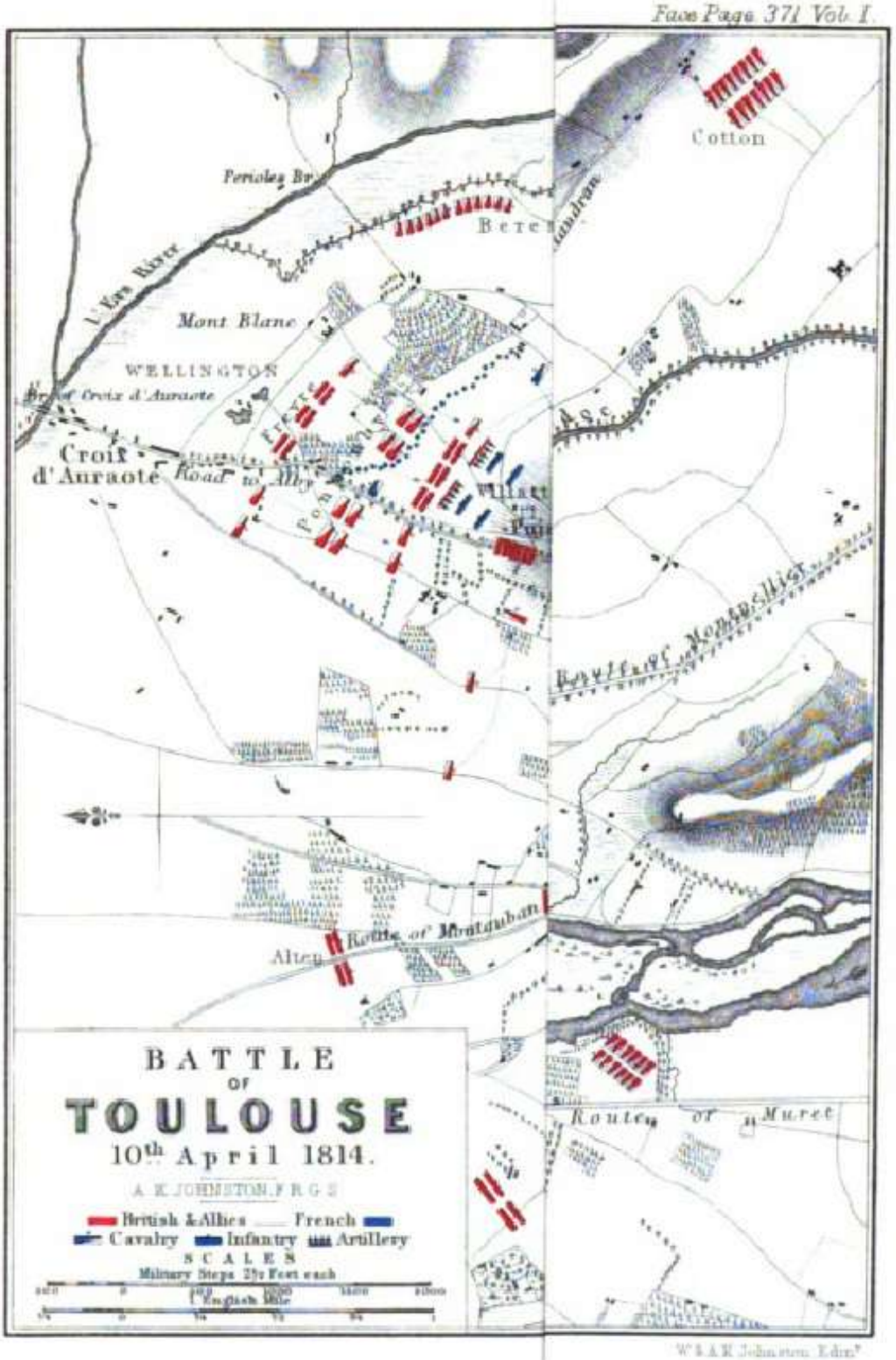

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the heights, he allowed the Allies to repair the bridge; Freyre's Spaniards crossed to Beresford's support on the 8th, the bridge was taken up again, and replaced higher on the river to communicate with Hill, whose corps lay in front of Saint Cyprien. ANN. 1814.

Early on the 10th April the Light Division crossed the Garonne and joined the 3rd Division in operations against the northern outworks and the *têtes de pont* over the canal. Freyre with his Spanish corps attacked the enemy in front on the heights, while Beresford moved up the left bank of the Ers river, with the 4th and 6th Divisions disposed in three columns, round the right flank of the French. Having gained a turning position by a march through ground so difficult that he had to leave his guns behind, Beresford formed his columns into line to the right, attacked and carried the redoubt covering the enemy's right, and effected a good lodgment. The entrenchments, however, and four other redoubts were still held by the French. Freyre's Spaniards, attacking these in front, encountered such a destructive fire that the whole corps, though fighting with the utmost determination, were repulsed in considerable disorder, though they rallied well on the Light Division when it moved up on their right. Beresford, after a necessary pause, during which Soult rearranged his right wing, brought up his artillery and resumed his advance along the ridge against the central redoubts. The Highland Brigade, composed of the 42nd, 71st, 79th, and 92nd Regiments, led the attack to the music of the pipes. Long and fierce was the fighting, but finally the French were overpowered. Driven from the whole line of his entrenchments, Soult surrendered the heights and withdrew his columns behind the canal of Languedoc, covered by the fire of the fortifications. Battle of Toulouse.

"In the whole of my experience," Wellington told Lord de Ros, "I never saw an army so strongly posted as the French at the battle of Toulouse. There ought to have been an accurate plan and description made of the whole affair as a

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Æt. 44. matter of professional science. Soult's staff were of the same opinion, and drew out plans after the cessation of arms, which they sent to me. I found, however, that the usual French boasting prevailed through the descriptions—here one English brigade had been *culbuté*, there the French had *passé sur le corps* of another; so I was quite disgusted, and, rolling the plans up, returned them to Marshal Soult with a plain message of my compliments." *

The death and casualty roll was deplorably heavy in proportion to the troops actually engaged: 31 officers of the Allies and 564 soldiers were returned as killed, while the wounded and missing amounted to 4,054. It was a sacrifice which might well have been avoided. Unknown to the commander on either side, couriers were speeding towards them bearing the news that there was no longer an Emperor of the French; Paris had capitulated on 30th March; Napoleon Buonaparte had abdicated, and all cause of quarrel between the brave nations had ceased to exist.

Abdication of Napoleon.

In ignorance of all this, Wellington lost no time in making the investment of Toulouse complete; but whether Soult despaired of sustaining so large a force pent up within its walls, or whether he felt insecure amid a population which had become ardently Legitimist, he resolved to give the Allies the slip, and, before they could complete the circle round him, he slipped out of Toulouse on the night of 12th April without tuck of drum, and escaped along the road to Villefranche and Castelnaudary. His departure was announced at sunrise to the Allies by the *drapeau blanc* of the Bourbons being run up on the flagstaff of the citadel, and a little later Wellington rode into the town at the head of his staff. He did not yet know of the great event in Paris, but the tremendous enthusiasm of his reception could not be resisted; he could not be the only figure in that joyous

* A similar account is given in Lord Mahon's notes (*Stanhope*, 246), and also in Lady Salisbury's journal (*Salisbury MSS.*, 1838), but in both instances the name of Suchet is given instead of Soult.

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throng without the white cockade. "Je porte," he wrote next day to d'Angoulême, "la cocarde blanche à présent, comme tout le monde." That evening a French and an English officer arrived from Paris, which they had left at midnight on the 7th, to acquaint him with the Emperor's abdication and the formation of a Provisional Government. ANN. 1814.

Unluckily the news did not reach Bayonne in time to prevent further bloodshed. On 14th April a sortie in force was made from the entrenched camp at that place, which was repulsed, but not without a loss to the Guards and the 38th Regiment of 843 officers and men. Sir John Hope himself, having his horse shot under him, and being wounded in two places, was taken prisoner with two of his staff. Sortie from Bayonne.

It is well known that Soult claimed the victory in the battle of Toulouse. On this point Wellington observed to Lady Salisbury—

"The claim of the French to the victory was ridiculous. The day after the battle, the only ground they possessed beyond the town was a strip about half a mile broad between the Garonne and the canal of Languedoc. I was preparing to attack them there when Soult retreated. . . . If Soult had succeeded in joining Suchet, I should still have been a match for them both. I could have done *anything* with that army: it was in such splendid order." *

Thus fell the curtain on the Peninsular campaign, which had lasted within a few weeks of six years—the mightiest conflict in which Great Britain ever has borne a part, and profoundly affecting the destiny of the whole human race. By a singular concurrence of genius and circumstance, a design, audacious in its scope, yet practical in every detail of it, formed itself in the mind of one of Britain's many Generals, and was entrusted to its author for execution, because of the accidental friendship of a few aristocratic families. No doubt Sir Arthur Wellesley's personality was one to inspire confidence; when he laid his scheme before Close of the Peninsular war.

* *Salisbury MSS.*, 1838.

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Æt. 44. Canning and Castlereagh he had already shown in India that he was a capable officer and administrator. But the minister whom Wellesley persuaded to entrust him with 9,000 men for Portugal in 1808 was the same who superseded him when that force was raised to 30,000, the same who chose Lord Chatham to command 40,000 troops in Walcheren in 1809. Through good report and ill, through difficulties and disappointments from random foreign Governments, headlong allies, and ill-trained officers, through sunshine and storm, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, while every throne in Europe rocked or was engulfed, alliances melted away or formed afresh for menace, this steadfast spirit maintained its purpose, this vigilant brain converted every changing circumstance to its use. Ministers at home, distraught by faction, harassed for means, weakened by wars in other regions, drew courage and constancy from their inflexible servant, who never veiled a truth and never glozed a peril. Calm, confident, resourceful, he went from strength to strength, till Europe began to recognise her true deliverer, and designed to withdraw him from the work of his choice, and set him face to face with Napoleon himself.

In the fulness of time that, too, was to come; but the time was not yet. Happily for himself, happily for the world, he was left to accomplish the task he had conceived, initiated, and so nobly sustained. The completeness of its fulfilment has raised the manner of it almost beyond criticism; yet in such an ancient and complicated art as war there will never be lack of critics. In the very last act of the great drama things would have gone differently, we are told by Wellington's great and friendly Belgian critic, if Suchet had done his duty and joined forces with Soult. "The battle of Orthez in all probability would have ended in favour of the French, in which case Wellington could not have occupied either Toulouse or Bordeaux." * This is criticism of a very common kind—to bind a man to his actions under circumstances as they

* *Brialmont*, ii. 228.

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actually happened, and explain how these actions were unsuited to circumstances which never took place. That they *ought* to have happened may be likely enough; but it is equally likely that they would have been met by different dispositions. ANN. 1814.

It is comparatively easy, after the secrets of each camp have been laid bare in official correspondence, and the circumstances of every case explained by the testimony of eye-witnesses—it is comparatively easy, I say, to point out how this thing or the other might have been better done or left undone. Wellington would never have advanced to Talavera if he had known as much as every reader of Napier's impassioned pages knows of the crotchets of Cuesta; the indiscipline of the Spanish troops, the utter breakdown of the Anglo-Portuguese transport. He would not have attempted the storm of Burgos had he foreseen that the officer commanding the assault would have disregarded orders plainly read out to him twice by Wellington himself. Points there must be in these great operations for reflection, for inquiry, for criticism, by the military student and expert. The General has never yet worn spurs who has not erred in strategy or failed in tactics. Even the sun is not without its spots. But it has been truly said that he who never makes a mistake usually never makes anything else, and the historian who invites his audience to the contemplation of flaws is most apt to present a false impression of the work as a whole and its author. The record of the Peninsular campaign is one of a stupendous performance, conducted through all its stages to a triumphant close by the same head which conceived its design. It seems little more than pedantry to demonstrate that one who planned his campaigns to accord with his forecast of the march of events in the rest of Europe, who fought at Salamanca because Napoleon was invading Russia, and timed his invasion of France by the movements of the allied Sovereigns in Germany, might have manœuvred his army with greater dexterity or conducted his sieges with better science.

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CHAPTER XV.

CONGRESS OF VIENNA: THE HUNDRED DAYS.

1814–1815.

April 19. . 1814. Suspension of arms. Wellington appointed British Ambassador to France.
May 4 . . . . . Arrives in France.
„ 10. . . . . Goes on embassy to Madrid.
„ 11. . . . . Created Duke of Wellington.
„ 24. . . . . Arrives in Madrid.
June 5 . . . . . Returns to France.
„ 23. . . . . Revisits England.
„ 28. . . . . Takes his seat in the House of Lords.
July 1 . . . . . Receives and returns thanks of the House of Commons.
August . . . . Visits the Netherlands.
„ 22. . . . . Proceeds to Paris as Ambassador.
January 24, 1815. Proceeds to Vienna as Plenipotentiary at the Congress.
March 1 . . . . . Napoleon lands at Cannes.
„ 20. . . . . Enters Paris. The Hundred Days.
„ 25. . . . . The Quadruple Alliance.
April 5 . . . . . Wellington takes command of the army in the Netherlands. Position of the forces of the Powers. Strength and character of Napoleon's forces. His plan of campaign. The Prussian army.
June 18. . . . . The Anglo-Belgian army.
Appendix C. . . . The Affair of Sultanpettah.

ON 19th April, 1814, Wellington, having received from the Marshals Soult and Suchet formal acknowledgment of the Provisional Government of France, concluded separate conventions with each for the suspension of hostilities and the total evacuation of Spain. Arrangements

Suspension of arms.

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were made for the return of the Spanish and Portuguese armies to their respective countries, and the British army was directed to prepare for immediate embarkation. It is a melancholy reflection that this noble comradeship should have been severed, the divisions, moulded by Wellington into an army which, at last, he was able to pronounce fit "to go anywhere and do anything," * should be scattered, without giving the nation an opportunity of welcoming home the troops who had redeemed the martial renown of Britain, kept the horrors of war at a distance from their land, and established the liberties of unborn generations. But the fratricidal conflict in America still dragged on; fourteen thousand of the Peninsular veterans were shipped off to be squandered round New Orleans and to languish in Antigua, including the well-tried 5th, 9th, 28th, and 29th Regiments.† Others were sent to the Mediterranean; others again to furnish Indian reliefs; some to the Netherlands, some to Ireland, the remainder going home to be reduced to a peace establishment. ANN. 1814.

As for Wellington, out of eight years of married life, more than six had been spent in active service abroad. Most of his Generals and subordinate officers had been home on leave, many of them had brought their wives to the Peninsula during the war, but he had never quitted his post. His two sons, whom he had never heard address him as father, were now schoolboys;‡ during all these years he had never set eyes either on his wife or any of his near relations, except his brother Henry. There is something of Spartan grandeur in the lonely, laborious figure. "To do great things," says Vauvenargues, "a man must live as though he had never to die." Yet had Wellington been something more than human had he not felt some longing for home, some yearning for repose. There are, however, but faint traces of either in his reply to

* This oft-quoted phrase occurs in the Duke's evidence before the Royal Commission on Military Punishments in 1836.

† *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 82, 135.

‡ At East Sheen.

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ÆT. 44. Lord Castlereagh, who wrote from Paris on 13th April, proposing his acceptance of the British Embassy to France.

Appointed British Ambassador in Paris.

"I should not, perhaps, propose this task to you, after the station you have filled, if I did not think the situation might derive an additional interest from the era at which we are arrived, and the authority your name and services would give, through this Court, to our general politics on the Continent." *

"Although," replied Wellington from Toulouse, "I have been so long absent from England, I should have remained as much longer if it had been necessary; and I feel no objection to another absence in the public service, if it be necessary or desirable." †

So far, therefore, from laying down the burden he had borne so long, Wellington but shifted it to the other shoulder. Having set matters in train for the dispersal of the allied forces, he travelled to Paris, arriving there on 4th May, and immediately took part in the deliberations of the allied Powers. Louis XVIII. had been restored to the throne by the Provisional Government, but there were a thousand weighty matters to be settled, involving ten thousand meticulous points, before the political chart of Europe could be restored to what it had been in 1792. Wellington was of all men the last to dwell on his own importance or the magnitude of his work, yet even he could not fail to be aware of the extraordinary extent and nature of the authority with which his conquests had invested him; and, talking as he was wont to do to Lady Salisbury, as if thinking aloud, he referred to it when the twelfth volume of the Despatches appeared in 1838.

"There is nothing more remarkable than the assumption and exercise of such authority by an individual placed in the midst of these Kings and Princes and their difficulties. But I believe it was the magnitude of the difficulties which placed in my hands the authority, and gave me the confidence to exercise it as I did." ‡

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 141, note. † *Despatches*, xi. 668.
‡ *Salisbury MSS.*, 1838.

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Most urgent of the questions for settlement was the future of Spain. Ferdinand VII. had resumed his crown amid fireworks and fêtes, bull-fights and Te Deums, salvoes and vivas—all the manifold means by which the warm-hearted Spaniards could show their delight. A wise king might have prolonged the enthusiasm beyond the descent of the last rocket, and have brought his country, chastened by adversity, into the quiet ways of industry and peace. But Ferdinand was not a wise king; and Napoleon, in restoring him unconditionally to Madrid after the battle of Leipsig, had taken such precautions as prevented him receiving good counsel from the man best qualified to give it. Instead of sending him into Spain by Bayonne, where he would have met Wellington, Napoleon had caused him to return to his country through Catalonia. ANN. 1814. Affairs of Spain.

Ferdinand found Spain governed under a very democratic constitution—the one-chambered constitution of 1812; this he abrogated at once, promising to substitute another, dissolved the Cortes, restored the Inquisition, and set on foot a cruel persecution of the *Liberales*. Instead of fulfilling his promise, he began to reign as a despot, surrounded by a *camarilla* of grandees and priests, until, to avert the danger of civil war, it became necessary for the Powers to interfere. Needless to say that the plenipotentiary chosen was Lord Wellington, the one man in Europe to whom all nations had become accustomed to turn in perplexity. Leaving Paris on 10th May, he was back in Toulouse on the 14th, reviewed and addressed the 3rd and 4th armies of Spain at Tarbe, urging them to be loyal to Ferdinand, and arrived in Madrid on the 24th. He was received by King and people with every mark of honour. Wellington returns to Madrid.

"Did you not notice," the Duque de San Carlos asked him after his first audience, "that when you entered the presence, the guards stamped their feet? That is only done for a grandee of the first order. You must indeed be a happy man!"

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Æt. 45.

Wellington would gladly have dispensed with the stamping of the guards, had he felt that his representations to the King were of much avail. Personally, he was favourably impressed with Ferdinand, but very much the reverse with his ministers. Wellington was a Tory of the Tories, but if there was one form of government he distrusted more deeply than democracy it was priest-rule. He laid before the King a memorandum * on behalf of the Powers, and especially of Great Britain, strongly urging that effect should be given to the promises he had made on ascending the throne, and that the numerous Liberals in prison should be either tried at once or released; "but," he reported to Lord Castlereagh, "I fear that I have done but little good." † Fresh promises in abundance, with flowery compliments, were all he carried away with him from Madrid on 5th June, though probably his prestige with the Spanish army had some effect in averting civil war.

On one point, indeed, Wellington was equipped with a cogent argument. The British Cabinet had adopted very strong views about the necessity for suppressing the slave trade all over the world. Britain was still paying a large subsidy into the Spanish Treasury; £800,000 was still due on the instalment for 1814, which was made conditional on the immediate and absolute cessation of what Wellington termed "that abominable traffic."

Created Duke of Wellington.

Intent upon the re-establishment of peace, Prince, Parliament, and people were eager in acknowledgment to the warrior whose prowess had done most to make an European peace possible. On 11th May Wellington was raised to the dignity of a duke; the House of Commons, on being asked to endow the dukedom with a grant of £300,000, adopted an amendment moved by Mr. Whitbread on behalf of the Whig Opposition—the very men who had once laughed Wellington's strategy to scorn—and made it half a million. Peerages were conferred also on his well-tried brothers-in-

* *Despatches*, xii. 40. † *Ibid.*, xii. 38.

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arms, Hill, Beresford, Cotton, Graham, and Hope. On 14th June at Bordeaux he took leave of his army in a brief but kindly general order,* and ten days later arrived in London to receive such an ovation from all ranks as the island race are ever ready to pay to valour—especially, let it be added, to successful valour. ANN. 1814.

All that ceremony can add to popular favour was displayed when the Duke of Wellington, in Field-Marshal's uniform under a peer's robes, was introduced by the Dukes of Richmond and Beaufort to present his patent and right of summons to the House of Lords. Still more remarkable, because unprecedented, was the scene in the House of Commons. A deputation of the House having been appointed to convey to the Duke its congratulations, he was asked to name a time convenient to himself for receiving them. Having expressed a desire to reply to the House in person, the 1st July was appointed for his reception. The Speaker and many of the members being in full dress, the House was informed that his Grace was in attendance, whereupon it was resolved that he should be admitted, a chair being set near the middle of the House. On the Duke entering and making his obeisance, the whole House rose. The Speaker informed him that a chair had been placed for his repose, and Wellington sat in it for some time covered. Then he rose, uncovered, and returned thanks in a brief speech for the "noblest gift that any subject had ever received." Wellington takes his seat in the House of Lords.

The Speaker's acknowledgment, though of almost equal brevity, was distinguished among ordinary parliamentary oratory by a passage which deserves a permanent place in English literature.

"For the repeated thanks and grants bestowed upon you by this House, in gratitude for your many and eminent services, you have thought fit this day to offer us your acknowledgments:

* *Despatches*, xii. 62.

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Æt. 45.

but this nation will know that it is still largely your debtor. It owes to you the proud satisfaction, that, amidst the constellation of great and illustrious warriors who have recently visited our country, we could present to them a leader of our own, to whom all, by common acclamation, conceded the pre-eminence; and when the will of Heaven, and the common destinies of our nature, shall have swept away the present generation, you will have left your great name and example as an imperishable monument, exciting others to like deeds of glory, and serving at once to adorn, defend, and perpetuate the existence of this country among the ruling nations of the earth."

Sir Thomas Graham, who, it will be remembered, left the Peninsula in September, 1813, because of ill health, had accepted in December the command of an expedition to aid the Dutch in their rising against Napoleon, and had been badly defeated in an attempt against Bergen-op-zoom. He remained, however, in command of an allied force of British, Hanoverian, Dutch, and Belgian troops. It was desirable to have the Duke's view of the defences of the Netherlands; therefore, before taking up his duties as Ambassador at Paris, he went to that country, accompanied by some engineer officers, and surveyed the frontier from Liége, along the Meuse and Sambre to Namur, Charleroi, Mons, Tournay, and the sea. With what different feelings he viewed these scenes from those when last he stood among them—in that dismal winter of 1794, when he laid the foundation of his knowledge by learning "how not to do it"!

Wellington visits the Netherlands.

His report contains one recommendation notable among many others. "The entrance to the Forêt de Soignies * by the high road which leads to Brussels from Binch, Charleroi and Namur, would, if worked upon, afford advantageous positions." † Ere twelve months should elapse, the spot indicated was to become famous as the field of Waterloo.

Wellington, returning to Paris on 22nd August, presented his credentials at the Tuileries, and immediately began his

Wellington goes to Paris as Ambassador.

* The real name is Soignes.

† *Despatches*, xii. 129.

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attempt to persuade the King to put down the slave trade. So much in earnest was the British Government, that he was empowered to offer an immediate advance of £3,000,000 as compensation to the French planters in the West Indies, or, alternatively, the free cession of the island of Trinidad, on condition that the traffic in slaves should be abolished at once.* He made little progress at first, even on these handsome terms. He complained that the violence with which the English press denounced the traffic irritated the French ministers and people to such a degree that no progress could be made, and every Frenchman scoffed at the idea of Great Britain being actuated by motives of pure humanity in attempting to suppress the slave trade.† ANN. 1814.

Cruel behaviour of Ferdinand VII.

Put not your trust in princes! In October Wellington was shocked to hear that General Alava, who had been Spanish Commissioner at his headquarters from 1809 to the close of the war, and to whom he was personally much attached, had been imprisoned by the Inquisition. Of course this was the act of King Ferdinand, under whose auspices this engine of tyranny, abolished by the Cortes, had resumed its atrocious functions, and Alava, as a Constitutionalist or *Liberale*, suffered with a multitude of others. Wellington wrote to Ferdinand a vigorous remonstrance, in consequence of which Alava was released on condition of perpetual banishment—fitting reward for the fidelity with which, while most of the grandees bent their necks to the French yoke, Alava devoted himself to preserving Ferdinand's throne.

Wellington's position in Paris.

Wellington's own position in Paris was not without danger. The King, indeed, regarded his presence there as a strength to himself; some of the new ministers, especially Talleyrand and Soult, welcomed their former foe as a guarantee of British support to the re-established dynasty; but there was still a strong and active anti-royalist party, and a mass of officers and soldiers thrown idle and discontented, prepared to overthrow any Government which could not find them

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 226. † *Despatches*, xii. 142.

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ÆT. 45. instant employment.* Besides these, as the Duke explained to Lord Bathurst, the host of civil *employés*, whom it had been Napoleon's policy to create, and whom he could afford to pay out of the contributions of conquered realms, had been sent about their business and become a source of danger. King Louis had no resources out of which to maintain them, and the necessity for retrenchment intensified the disaffection which there was nothing in his personal attributes to counteract. All the materials of a fresh revolution were lying about, and Wellington, the chief bulwark of the restored monarchy, received warning that his assassination had been planned.† Lord Liverpool, also, having information that some of the French Marshals were pressing the King's weak Government to arrest the Duke, whose presence they regarded as offensive to the dignity of France and an especial affront to her army, was most anxious for a decent excuse to recall him; but Wellington at first strongly resisted all suggestions to that effect. In order to overcome his objections, Liverpool asked him to take command of the forces in North America, with full powers to make peace or carry on the war according to his judgment.‡ Active service, he urged, was sufficient excuse for recalling him from a position which gave offence to a large number of Frenchmen, and Liverpool rightly judged that it was a summons which Wellington would be unwilling to decline; but he was still more unwilling to desert the post of present danger.

7th November.—"I feel no disinclination to undertake the American concern, but to tell you the truth, I think that, under existing circumstances, you cannot at this moment allow me to quit Europe. You might do so possibly in March next, but now it appears impossible. You already know my opinion of the danger at Paris. There are so many discontented people, and there is so little to prevent mischief, that the event might occur

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 315, 346, 368, 422, etc.
† *Ibid.*, ix. 458. ‡ *Ibid.*, ix. 406.

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on any night; and, if it did occur, I don't think I should be allowed to depart. . . . But I confess I don't like to depart from Paris, and I wish the Government would leave the time and mode at my discretion. To go to Vienna is a bad pretence; there is no good reason for going; and it would be better to be called to England for a few days to attend the court-martial, and afterwards to be detained. It must also be observed that to go at all at the present moment is, in the opinion of the King's friends, to allow him and ourselves to suffer a defeat, and we must not do that." * ANN. 1815.

The Cabinet, however, set more store by the Ambassador's safety than on Louis's throne. Liverpool wrote more urgently than before—"We shall not feel easy till we hear of your having landed at Dover. . . . We most earnestly entreat you to return to England with as little delay as possible." † The Duke, who never disobeyed an order, replied, "I will make immediate arrangements for quitting Paris. No man is a judge in his own case: but I confess that I don't see the necessity for being in a hurry to remove me from hence." ‡

But this, the third occasion offered to Wellington of service beyond the Atlantic, ended as the two others did, in his energy being directed elsewhere. The British and American peace commissioners, then sitting at Ghent, were advancing slowly to an agreement, and to send Wellington to reorganise the campaign on what was evidently the eve of peace, would have been too transparent a device for getting him out of Paris and the dangers which beset him there. So another and more plausible scheme was hit upon. A Congress of the Great Powers had been sitting at Vienna for several weeks, rearranging the dislocated map of Europe, and many crowned heads were collected in that capital to look after their own territories and claims. Great Britain, however, was represented by her Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, who discovered opportunely that his presence at the opening of Parliament in February could not be

The Congress of Vienna.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 422. † *Ibid.*, ix. 431. ‡ *Ibid.*, ix. 434.

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ÆT. 45. dispensed with, and wrote to ask the Duke of Wellington to relieve him at the Congress. Endorsing the invitation, Lord Liverpool put it beyond the Duke's power to offer further resistance to leaving Paris, for he described the duty as implying the exercise of "a discretion which the Prince Regent and his Government would not like to entrust to any individual out of the Cabinet, except the Duke of Wellington."* Quitting Paris, therefore, on 24th January, 1815, he arrived in Vienna on 3rd February, leaving his faithful aide-de-camp, Lord Fitzroy Somerset, as *chargé d'affaires* at the Tuileries.

It certainly called for a calm head and firm hand to take part in the deliberations in progress at the Austrian capital. There remains an interesting sketch of the situation in a letter written by the Duke of Wellington many years afterwards (2nd January, 1847) to Lord Stanley.†

"The Emperor Alexander was an extraordinary man in his time. He had been educated under the authority of the Empress Catherine by a certain Monsieur de la Harpe, a Genevese philosopher of the modern school, and there existed in his mind a mixture of religious enthusiasm, corporal's mania, a military discipline madness, attachment to despotick authority—particularly to that of the Czar, and Russian ambition; each of which feelings in turn governed his conduct, none of them in moderation, and he was, upon the whole, as difficult a personage to manage as has appeared at any time. . . . Lord Castlereagh, who had concluded and signed the treaty of the Peace, was appointed the Ambassador from this country to the Congress of Vienna. On his arrival there he found the Ministers of the allied Powers in general, but particularly the Minister of the Emperor of Austria, in a state of dismay, in consequence of the extravagant pretensions of the Emperor Alexander, the peremptory tone in which they were asserted . . . with views of obtaining compensation for Russia at the expense and by the spoliation of the Saxon Monarchy, and above all by the liberal

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 462. † Afterwards 14th Earl of Derby.

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ALEXANDER I., EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

(*From a Sketch by Carle Vernet, in* 1815.)

[*Vol. i. p.* 386.

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democratic colour given to this scheme of ambition which was disliked by all and viewed with apprehension even by the Prussian plenipotentiaries themselves, who had orders to urge upon the Congress the adoption of these measures. . . . The allied Ministers were right in prevailing upon Lord Castlereagh to fight their battle for them. It was the only chance they had of stopping the Emperor, and I really believe that if Lord Castlereagh had not been successful, the Congress would have dissolved itself, and Buonaparte, landing in a few months afterwards, would have found the Powers of Europe disunited, and each acting separately, as some have said he expected to find them. . . . I was not then at Vienna. I was the Ambassador at Paris, and, having been in constant correspondence with Lord Castlereagh, I was fully informed of what was going on. I was sent to relieve Lord Castlereagh as the Ambassador at the Congress, either late in 1814 or early in 1815. Lord Liverpool and the Ministers in England had for some time been alarmed respecting the threat of the French newspapers respecting myself, and had been anxious to remove me from Paris. I felt no such alarm; but I confess that I believe that if I had been at Paris a few months afterwards, when Buonaparte landed in France from Elba, and King Louis XVIII. quitted Paris to go to the Netherlands, I should have been seized, and at all events prevented from joining the army in Flanders!" * ANN. 1815.

Outwardly, indeed, all was pacific and festive; there was no symptom of the ebullient condition of Europe in the long succession of dinner-parties, balls, and concerts occasioned by the presence of so many dignitaries, crowned and otherwise, in that hospitable city. "Le congres danse," observed Talleyrand, "mais il ne marche pas." Not the less surely were affairs drifting towards war, each Power being intent to curb its neighbour or increase its own territory, rather than to restore the general equilibrium. "Never," wrote Castlereagh to Wellington on 7th December, "never at any former period was so much spoil thrown loose for the world to scramble for." † Russia pushed her claims upon Poland, Prussia upon

* *Apsley House MSS.*, 1847. † *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 465.

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Æt. 45. Saxony, and Austria upon both; France kept a hungry eye on Holland and the Netherlands, and, albeit it may savour of partiality in a British subject to affirm so much, it is patent on the instructions to her plenipotentiary that the only Great Power which had no design of aggrandisement was England, whose object was to confirm an alliance between herself and Austria, Russia, and Prussia. By the time Wellington came on the scene, this scheme had fallen to pieces, and Lord Castlereagh had incurred the bitter displeasure of the Emperor of Russia.

"Of this Grand Alliance we must consider two, viz. Russia and Prussia, as practically ranged against us . . . and Austria alone with us. It is evident, therefore, that the fifth great European Power, which is France, must turn the scale. . . . The truth is that a war with England would at this moment be so popular in France, and the recovery of Flanders so desirable in the opinion of all parties in that country, that nothing would prevent France from joining the Northern Allies but the influence of some personal and some national feelings, which at present operate in our favour." *

Matters went from bad to worse. The only Napoleonic sovereign left was Murat, King of Naples, with whom the Emperor of Russia entered into close relations, abetting him in his aggression on the Papal States, and interrupting the return of the Russian army to their native country in order to confirm his grip on Poland, while the King of Prussia kept his talons fixed on Saxony. King Louis, on the other hand, was impatient for the dethronement of Murat, and Austria, by Wellington's advice, was concentrating 150,000 men on the frontiers of Italy to restrain Murat's invasion of the northern duchies.

Escape of Napoleon from Elba.

Everything pointed to a conflagration, in which Russia and Prussia would have been ranged in a mighty contest against Great Britain, France, and Austria; but all disputes were

* Lord Liverpool's memorandum, 12th December, 1814.

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hushed by the startling news, conveyed to Wellington on 7th March in a despatch from Lord Burghersh dated the 1st, that Napoleon had escaped from Elba with all his civil and military officers and 1,100 soldiers. Next day came word that he had landed at Cannes and was marching on Paris. The Plenipotentiaries at once sunk all their differences, and issued a proclamation of their firm resolution to maintain the peace of Europe. ANN. 1815.

Wellington, as we know, over-estimated the enthusiasm of the French people in general for the restored dynasty.

"It is my opinion," he wrote to Castlereagh on 12th March, "that Buonaparte has acted upon false or no information, and that the King (of France) will destroy him without difficulty and in a short time. If he does not, the affair will be a serious one, and a great and immediate effort must be made, which will doubtless be successful." *

Seldom has an ambassador sent home a more misleading despatch: nevertheless, preparations on a great scale were set on foot to meet the emergency. There was still an Anglo-Hanoverian corps in Belgium under the Prince of Orange, which, with the Belgian and Dutch army, Wellington recommended should be put at the disposition of the King of France, and offered to take command of it. The Emperor of Russia was for managing the campaign by a council, and "expressed a wish," wrote the Duke, "that I should be with him, but not a very strong one; and as I should have neither character nor occupation in such a situation, I should prefer to carry a musket." † The Emperor, however, coupled his proposals with an intimation, which he desired Wellington to communicate to the British Government, that he could not move his troops without a subsidy from England. The King of France also was clamorous for money; Austria was already in receipt of a subsidy; the annual payments to Spain and Portugal had only ceased with the close of the year 1814;

* *Despatches*, xii. 268. † *Ibid.*

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Æt. 45. and Wellington was empowered to advance £400,000 to Prussia.* In short, the Powers of Europe seemed to regard the British Treasury as an inexhaustible well, into which each one of them claimed the right to let down his bucket. Not one of these mighty machines would work without a golden key, to be supplied by England. Authority, therefore, was given to Wellington to guarantee a subsidy of £5,000,000 to be divided among the three Great Powers,† in addition to an indemnity of £2,100,000 which Great Britain paid for the proportion in which her contingent was short of her obligations under treaty. The disposal of this money was entrusted entirely to the Duke of Wellington.‡

All the fortitude of the British Cabinet was put to the test by the renewal of the war. No further back than 20th February, when it had been a question of sending an allied expedition against Murat, Liverpool had written to Castlereagh—

"You will not have been three days in London before you will have been thoroughly convinced of the absolute impracticability of our engaging in any military operations. . . . The truth is, the country is at this moment peace mad. Many of our best friends think of nothing but the reduction of taxes and low establishments, and it is very doubtful whether we could involve the country in a war at this moment for objects which, on every principle of sound policy, ought to lead to it. . . . After such a contest for twenty years we must let people taste of the blessings of peace before we can fairly expect to screw them up to a war spirit, even in a just cause." §

Howbeit, there was no hesitation in the instructions forwarded at once to Wellington. One propitious event, at least, coincided with the renewal of the storm; peace had been concluded with the United States, and the British troops were recalled with all speed from America.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 597.
† *Ibid.*, ix. 608.
‡ *Ibid.*, x. 92.
§ *Ibid.*, ix. 573.

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The Powers at Vienna, alarmed by reports of the progress of Napoleon, desired Wellington to proceed at once to the Netherlands and take command of the troops on the frontier. He contented himself with reporting this demand to Castlereagh on 18th March, asked for instructions, and proceeded calmly with the affairs of the Conference, which, at the moment, consisted of nothing more vital than a rearrangement of the Swiss cantons. Castlereagh's reply, dated 12th March, crossed Wellington's inquiry. ANN. 1815.

"The Prince Regent, relying entirely on your Grace's zeal and judgment, leaves it to you, without further orders, either to remain at Vienna or to put yourself at the head of the army in Flanders. The only reservation I am directed to make is, that your Grace is not to expose yourself by returning to the interior of France, unless in the command of troops." *

At last, on 25th March, a treaty of alliance was concluded between Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain, binding them to maintain the treaty of Paris, and not to lay down arms until "Buonaparte should be placed absolutely beyond possibility of exciting disturbance and renewing his attempts to possess himself of the supreme power in France." Quadruple Alliance.

Wellington still thought lightly of the situation. "You will have seen," he wrote on the 24th to his brother Sir Henry at Madrid, "what a breeze Buonaparte has stirred up in France. We are all unanimous here, and in the course of about six weeks there will not be fewer than 700,000 men on the French frontier."

The "breeze" was swiftly acquiring the force of a hurricane. Napoleon marched from strength to strength. At Grenoble soldiers sent against him lowered their muskets before his bared breast—"Which of you will fire on your Emperor?" Their commander, Labedoyère, tore off the white cockade and joined him. Macdonald and Ney, of all Napoleon's old Marshals the last to take service under The Hundred Days.

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 591.

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Æt. 45. the King, pursued opposite courses. Macdonald, true to his colours, escaped alone from Lyons, amid shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* from his troops. Ney, a Peer of the Restoration, marched from Paris vowing that "he would bring back the usurper in an iron cage," but he had not got further than Lons-le-Saulnier before he threw off the mask. He told the prefect of l'Ain that the Marshals of France, acting in concert, had recalled Buonaparte,* and that the army were of one mind. On 20th March Napoleon entered Paris, the Most Christian King having quitted it secretly at two in the morning, without notifying his intention to any of the foreign ministers. Between eight and nine that evening, Napoleon was installed in his old quarters at the Tuileries. At once he set about a policy of conciliation towards the Powers. On 4th April he wrote to the Prince Regent, expressing his hopes that the treaty of peace concluded between Great Britain and France on 30th May, 1814, should continue uninterrupted, and that the peace of Europe should not be disturbed. This letter Lord Castlereagh, by the Prince's command, returned unopened, and the letters from the Duc de Vicence to Castlereagh were forwarded for the information of the Congress at Vienna.† The Whig Opposition, unmindful of the discredit incurred by the falsification of all their predictions about the Peninsular war, once more took up the cudgels for Napoleon. We had no right, said Mr. Whitbread, to interfere with the French people in their choice of a ruler; persistence in a war policy would land Britain in bankruptcy; the name of Wellington was dishonoured by attachment to the declaration by the Powers, in which Napoleon was pronounced *hors de la loi*—beyond the pale of humanity, which Mr. Whitbread interpreted into a direct incitement to assassination.

Wellington takes command of army

It is doubtful if Wellington realised the intensity of the crisis, till he reached Brussels on 5th April to take command of the forces on the frontier. The magnificent array of

* *Suppl. Despatches*, ix. 602. † *Ibid.*, x. 699.

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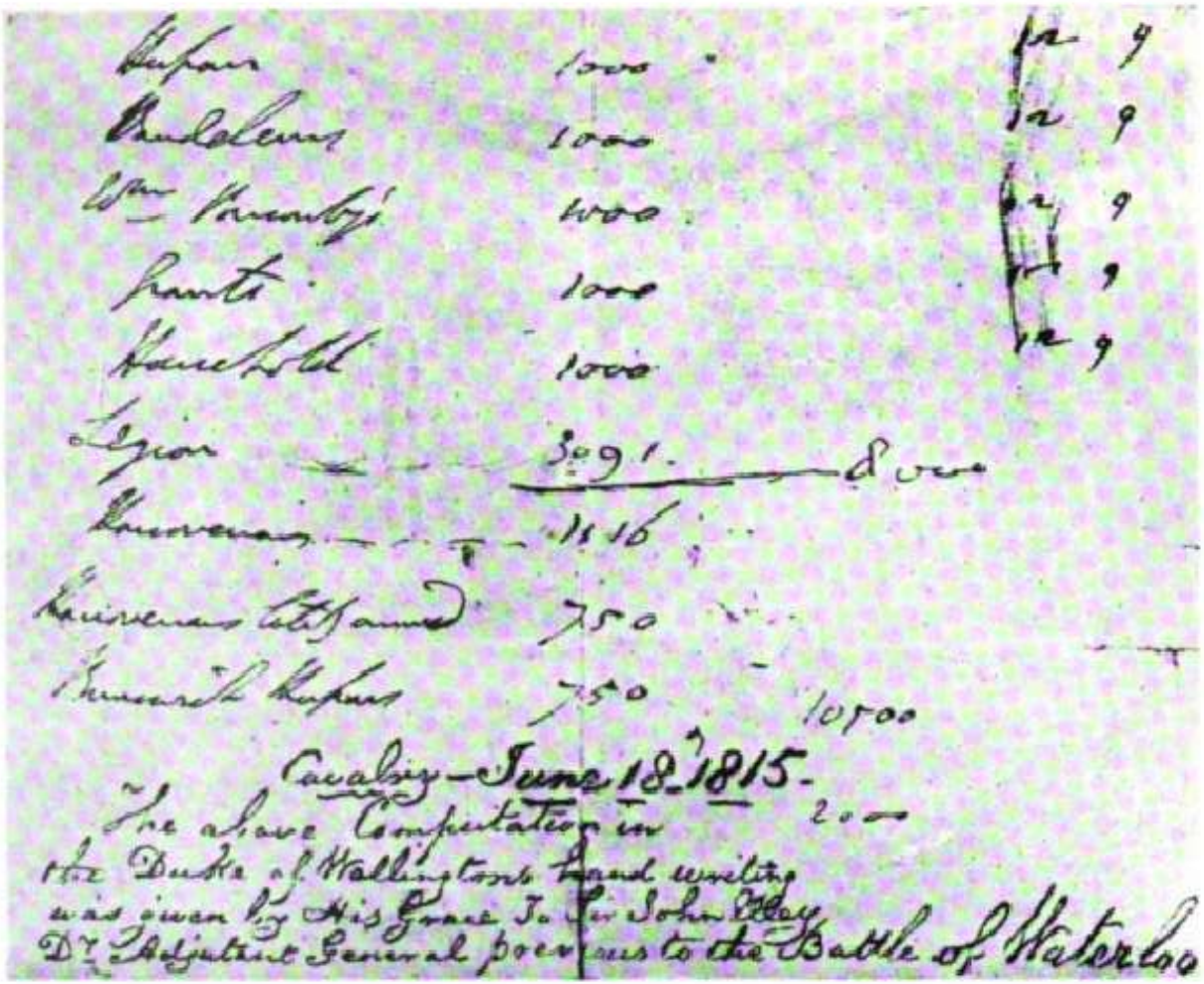
Cavalry — June 18th 1815.
The above Computation in
the Duke of Wellington's hand writing
was given by His Grace to Sir John Elley
D.r Adjutant General previous to the Battle of Waterloo

MEMORANDUM, IN THE DUKE'S HANDWRITING (REDUCED), OF THE ALLIED CAVALRY BEFORE WATERLOO.

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700,000 soldiers of which he had spoken so confidently was scattered far and wide. The Russians were in Poland, the Austrians were fighting Murat in Italy; only 30,000 Prussians, occupying the newly annexed provinces on the Rhine, were at hand to co-operate with the composite force of 24,200 British, Dutch, Belgians, Brunswickers, and Hanoverians out of which he had to form an army. The British troops, only 4,000 in all, were mostly recruits; so were the 7,000 Hanoverians. Most of the 2,000 Belgians had served under Napoleon, a poor guarantee for their fidelity,* and they were so bad that at first they could not be brigaded with the others. Wellington's letter to Lord Bathurst, written the day after his arrival in Brussels, was as nearly despondent as anything he ever penned.

ANN. 1815 in the Netherlands.

"Your Lordship will see by my letter to General —— in what state we stand as to numbers. I am sorry to say I have a very bad account of the troops; and —— appears to be unwilling to allow them to be mixed with ours, which, although they are not of the best, would afford a chance of our making something of them. Although I have given a favourable opinion of ours to General ——, I cannot help thinking, from all accounts, that they are not what they ought to be to enable us to maintain our military character in Europe. It appears to me that you have not taken in England a clear view of your situation, that you do not think war certain, and that a great effort must be made, if it is hoped that it shall be short. You have not called out the militia, or announced such an intention in your message to Parliament, by which measure your troops of the line in Ireland or elsewhere might become disposable; and how we are to make out 150,000 men, or even the 60,000 of the defensive part of the treaty of Chaumont, appears not to have been considered. If you could let me have 40,000 good British infantry, besides those you insist on having in garrisons, the proportion settled by treaty that you are to furnish of cavalry, that is to say, the eighth of 150,000 men, including in both the old

* *Suppl. Despatches*, x. 703.

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Æt. 45. German legion, and 150 pieces of British field artillery fully horsed, I should be satisfied, and take my chance for the rest, and engage that we would play our part in the game. But, as it is, we are in a bad way."*

The Duke felt greatly at a loss in the want of Sir George Murray, his Quartermaster-General and right-hand man in the Peninsula, who, thinking there was no more service to be done in Europe, had accepted a command in America; and he complained that he was not allowed to choose his own Generals and staff for the campaign.

"To tell you the truth," he wrote to Lord Bathurst on 4th May, "I am not very well pleased with the manner in which the Horse Guards have conducted themselves towards me. It will be admitted that the army is not a very good one; and, being composed as it is, I might have expected that the Generals and the staff formed by me in the last war would have been allowed to come to me again; but, instead of that, I am overloaded with people I have never seen before. . . However, I'll do the best I can with the instruments which have been sent to assist me."†

Even after the arrival of numerous reinforcements from England, he wrote to Lord Stewart, his old Adjutant-General in the Peninsula, "I have got an infamous army, very weak and ill-equipped, and a very inexperienced staff."‡ "I wish to God you had a better army," was all the comfort he received at first from the Duke of York's military secretary. Then Wellington bethought him of the excellent Portuguese troops created by Marshal Beresford, the "fighting cocks" of the Peninsular army, and application was made to the Regency at Lisbon for the services of 12,000 or 14,000 men, subject, of course, to the usual subsidy from Great Britain. Wellington would not ask for more, because, as he told Beresford, the Spanish Government could not be trusted not

* *Despatches*, xii. 291. † *Suppl. Despatches*, x. 219.
‡ *Despatches*, xii. 358.

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to take advantage of a favourable occasion to take possession of Portugal.* George Canning, British minister at Lisbon at this time, was unable, after protracted negociations, to obtain a contingent, partly owing to the timidity of the Regency lest they should exceed their powers, for the Prince Regent of Portugal was still in America, and still more owing to the opposition of Wellington's old enemy, Principal Souza and his party. The only support, therefore, on which Wellington could rely in the defence of the Belgian frontier, which all recognised as the most valuable, was the Prussian army under Count Kleinst in the Rhine provinces, numbering at first only 30,000 of all arms. ANN. 1815. Position of the forces of the Powers.

For the safety of the other countries bordering on France, 176,000 Russians under Count Barclay de Tolly were moving up through Germany and to guard the Middle Rhine, while 90,000 Austrians under Prince Schwartzenberg and Archduke Ferdinand took post along the Rhine between Basle and Mannheim, and the Bavarian army, under Prince Wrede, with contingents from Baden, Wurtemburg, and Hesse, numbering in all 80,000 men, gathered on the Upper Rhine. In addition to these, the Emperor of Austria, having totally defeated Murat and restored King Ferdinand to the throne of Naples, was concentrating 120,000 men in Lombardy to support his forces on the frontier. This display of force might well be supposed enough to secure all parts of Europe from French aggression: but the allied Powers had far more than that in view; they had resolved to put it out of Napoleon's power to be a menace to the peace of the Continent, and an invasion of France had been decided on as soon as the Russian and Austrian armies should be in a position to advance. The destruction of Napoleon's power was their purpose, irrespectively of the possible restoration of Louis XVIII.

"Our object," wrote Wellington to Castlereagh on 24th April, "should be if possible to restore the King, as the measure most

* *Despatches*, xii. 321; *Suppl. Despatches*, xiv. 540.

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Æt. 45. likely to ensure the tranquillity of Europe for a short time; and although we cannot declare that to be our object, we should take care to avoid to do anything, and particularly to declare anything, which can tend to defeat it." *

Wellington, from the moment he arrived at Brussels on 5th April, perceived the necessity for strengthening the defences of the frontier, because, although he expected that the allied Powers would be in a position to make a combined advance into France at the beginning of May, he could not neglect the chance of Napoleon assuming the offensive, or even defeating the invading armies. In order, therefore, to protect his communications with England through Antwerp and Ostend, he caused the existing works at those places and Nieuport to be strengthened, and employed 20,000 labourers in constructing new ones at Ypres, Audenarde, Tournay, Ath, Mons, and Ghent. Notwithstanding his diligence in these defensive works, and the backward state of British reinforcements, he was earnestly anxious to strike a blow before Napoleon's preparations should be further developed. It has been the fashion of military critics to esteem Wellington as not only a master of Fabian strategy, but as a strategist whose genius inclined him to repel rather than to assail, trusting more to the difficulties of his enemy in holding a large force together than to the effect of his own initiative.† It was not so in this instance. Time was now all on the side of his adversary. Napoleon in Paris, with all the fortresses of France in his hands and the food supply of the nation at his back, was in a position very different from that of his

* *Suppl. Despatches*, x. 147.

† The present Commander-in-chief has lent some sanction to this view. In writing an introduction to Major Griffiths' *Wellington and Waterloo* (Cassell and Co., 1898), Lord Wolseley draws a comparison between Marlborough and Wellington, and observes: "The former always took the offensive, the latter usually waited to be attacked. . . . Whilst Marlborough will be remembered for his persistent and brilliant offensive, history will always couple Wellington's name with that of Fabius as a tactician."

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Marshals in Spain, with long and difficult communications through a hostile country. The longer he was left alone, the more powerful he would become; he must not be allowed a single week longer than absolutely necessary. Wellington, therefore, wrote on 10th and 13th April to Lord Clancarty,* who had succeeded him as Plenipotentiary at the Congress of Vienna, laying before the Powers a complete and concerted plan of campaign,† and urging the necessity for prompt action. ANN. 1815.

"The ministers of the allied Powers and the august Sovereigns will see how important it is that no time should be lost in commencing offensive operations. This point is so clear, that it would be a useless waste of your time and mine to discuss it; but there is a period approaching before which it is desirable that our forces should enter France."

But as the month of April passed away it became evident that the choice of battle-ground lay, not with the Powers, but with Napoleon. That giant in resource was ready before the Russian and Austrian armies were near the frontier. Never was his faculty for developing the military strength of the French nation manifested in such an extraordinary and concentrated degree as in those Hundred Days. With every desire to strike home, Wellington had to wait for the other Powers. Not for the first time in his history does his attitude recall that of the cavalier in the Eastern fable who, riding round the city, read inscribed on the first gate—"Be bold!" and on the second—"Be bold, and evermore be bold!" but on the third—"Be not too bold!"

On 15th January, 1815, the royal army of France numbered 195,883 of all ranks, without reckoning the *maison militaire*, the gendarmerie, and the veterans.‡ By 15th February this Strength of the French army.

* *Despatches*, xii. 295, 302.

† *Ibid.*, xii. 304.

‡ *Houssaye*, 1, 2. Napoleon's statement that the royal army on 20th March numbered only 149,000 (*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France en* 1815) is as misleading as Colonel Charras's (*Campagne de* 1815) estimate of 224,000. Houssaye's figures are incontestable, being taken from official documents.

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Æt. 45. had been augmented by 7,000 or 8,000 soldiers recalled to service under the decree of the previous November. But when the royal army obeyed, as it did almost to a man, the summons of Napoleon, he was obliged to disband the Swiss and the 1er *regiment étranger* to the number of 3,208. In round numbers, he found himself at the beginning of April at the head of 200,000 regular troops. Of the twenty Marshals of France, Berthier, Marmont, and Victor were with King Louis in Belgium. They were struck from the roll; so were Oudinot and Augereau; while Macdonald, though much personal persuasion was exerted by Napoleon and by other officers to bring him back, remained firm in his resolve not to serve against the King of France. Gouvion Saint-Cyr was received to pardon, but no command was given him; neither was gallant Kellermann employed at first, but Serurier was retained in his command of the Invalides. Lefebvre was retired on account of his age, and the same disability prevented the employment of Masséna. Murat had ceased to be a Marshal of France when he became King of Naples. He was now in retreat at Toulon, and prayed hard to be received again to his command; but Napoleon could not forgive him for having been ranged among the enemies of France in the year previous. It is said that afterwards, in the mournful solitude of St. Helena, Napoleon repented of having disdained the service of this splendid cavalry commander.* Jourdan, author of the conscription—that stupendous instrument of ambition—was appointed Governor of Besançon; Brune was placed at the head of the 9th military district of Marseilles; to Suchet was committed the army of the Alps; Mortier had command of the cavalry of the guard; Grouchy became Commander-in-chief of cavalry in the army of the North; but Moncey was shelved with a seat in the Chambre des Paris. Soult replaced Berthier—

* "A Waterloo Murat nous eût valu peutêtre la victoire. Que fallait il? Enfoncer trois ou quatre carrés Anglais. Murat était précisement l'homme de la chose."

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cette brute de Berthier—as chief of the staff; and as for Ney —*le plus brave des braves*—it was his lot to see post after post filled, without hint of employment for himself. ANN. 1815.

Two hundred thousand troops were nothing against all the power of Europe; Napoleon never deceived himself about that. On 9th April he issued the *rappel* to the men on six months' furlough and to 85,000 men who had deserted rather than serve the Bourbons, a measure which brought to the eagles not less than 75,898 soldiers in the early days of June.* On the following day a decree went forth mobilising the Gardes Nationales, which numbered 234,720, of which 150,000 had reported themselves by 15th June. On 18th May Napoleon appealed to all retired soldiers to rejoin the army, which produced 25,000 men fit for garrison duty. The conscription had been abolished under the royal charter, and Napoleon hesitated at first to revive it. Marshal Davout, his War Minister, tried to dissuade him from such a course, and the Conseil d'État refused to sanction it; Napoleon overruled both, and the conscripts of 1815 were called out by a decree of 4th June. The response completely falsified Davout's apprehensions; the enthusiasm, except in the western departments, was greater than in revolutionary times, and within a week 46,419 eager recruits had been enrolled. How these were paid, clothed, and armed is no part of this narrative; for the purpose in hand it is sufficient to record that Napoleon, having landed in March with 1,100 men at his back, before the close of those wondrous Hundred Days had the disposal of a regular army of 312,400 and an auxiliary force of 222,600—in all 535,000 of all classes—and calculated that by 1st October he would have not less than 800,000. Such was the output of the marvellous machinery devised by Jourdan in the conscription.

Nothing could have been finer than the spirit animating the French troops. The magic of the Emperor's presence was hardly needed to dispel the artificial sentiment of loyalty

* *Houssaye*, 36.

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Æt. 45. towards the Bourbon, which, though it was more real, and amounted to something locally in the west and south, had never touched the heart of the army. Enthusiasm is a feeble word to describe the feelings with which the soldiers tore off the *cocarde blanche* and mounted the tricolour. But among his high military officials Napoleon encountered a different state of matters. There were jealousies, there were enmities, there were *griefs*, which rendered the apportionment of command a difficult one. Berthier was lost to him—Berthier, who, though a Marshal of France, never was a *tête militaire*, yet possessed administrative qualities and technical experience which had rendered him an excellent chief of the staff for twenty years, and one who thoroughly understood his master.* To replace Berthier Napoleon chose Soult, although so recently as in his *ordre du jour* of 9th March he had denounced the Emperor as a madman and an adventurer. It was not a felicitous choice. Soult was a splendid commander, but his career had ill fitted him for the duties of chief of the staff; moreover, many suspicions attached to him, and the officers of the army detested him.† In the appointment of Generals of division, Napoleon was guided chiefly by the advice of Davout, his War Minister. There were many heart-burnings and dissensions among these officers, but with these we have little concern here. What remains is the fact that within two months Napoleon had collected a powerful army,

* "I do not believe," said the Duke to Lord de Ros, "Berthier to have been a man of any remarkable talent, but he thoroughly understood Napoleon's views and system of carrying on the affairs of headquarters. It was confidently said that when Napoleon inquired of Soult on the appearance of the Prussians during the battle of Waterloo whether intelligence had been sent of their approach to Grouchy, Soult replied, 'J'ai envoyé un officier.' 'Un officier,' said Buonaparte. 'Ah, si mon pauvre Berthier etait ici il en aurait envoyé six!'" (*de Ros MS.*). Berthier did not survive the severance from his old master for long. Leaving Ghent in May, he tried to reach the French frontier by Basle, but was detained at Stockach by the Prince of Hohenzollern. On 1st June, as a regiment of Russian dragoons were passing his windows on their way to the seat of war, he fell or threw himself out, and was killed on the spot.

† *Houssaye*, 58.

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as well equipped and disciplined as any that had ever served him, and commanded by Generals who had given proof of their quality on many fields.* ANN. 1815.

Napoleon was as swift to decide how to employ his forces as he had shown himself rapid in organising them. Had he awaited the attack of the gathering Allies, he must have invited all the evils of war to descend on French territory, while he employed his army in the manner least in accord with the French military genius, which is always strongest in attack. He preferred to carry the war upon foreign soil, and to fall upon the British and Prussian armies in Flanders before his other assailants had come into line. He detailed the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th Corps d'armée, the Imperial Guard, and a large force of cavalry, for the immediate invasion of Belgium. The command of the cavalry was given, as has been mentioned, to Grouchy; the various corps d'armée were commanded respectively by Drouet d'Erlon, Reille, Vandamme, Gérard, and the Comte de Lobau; and the whole force amounted to— Napoleon assumes the offensive.

Infantry	89,415	
Cavalry	23,595	
Artillery	11,578	with 344 guns
	124,588	

Prince Blücher, who had assumed command of the Prussian army, had his headquarters at Namur. His forces were divided into four Corps—the 1st at Charleroi under Zieten, the 2nd under Pirch I. at Namur, the 3rd under Thielemann at Ciney, and the 4th under Bülow at Liége; consisting in all of— The Prussian army.

Infantry	99,715	
Cavalry	11,879	
Artillery	9,360	with 312 guns
	120,954	

* It is a remarkable and interesting fact, in view of the average age of British Generals serving at the present time, that of all Napoleon's Generals in this army only two exceeded his own age of forty-six. Grouchy and Drouet d'Erlon were each forty-nine, and every General had seen twenty years of war service.

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Æt. 45.

The Anglo-Belgian army.

The right of the 1st Prussian Corps communicated at Genappe with the left of the Anglo-Dutch army Allies under the Duke of Wellington, which was organised in two corps, with a reserve—a novelty in British practice which, in effect, was only imperfectly adhered to in the campaign. The composition of the allied army on 13th June, the day when Wellington received the final refusal of the Portuguese Regency to furnish a contingent, was as follows:—

British	31,253
King's German Legion	6,387
Hanoverians	15,935
Dutch-Belgians	29,214
Brunswickers	6,808
Nassau contingent	2,880
Engineers, staff corps, etc.	1,240
	93,717

The proportion of the various arms was thus—

Infantry	69,829	
Cavalry	14,482	
Artillery	8,166	with 196 guns
Engineers, etc.	1,240	
	93,717*	

Wellington's 1st Corps was under command of the Prince of Orange, and occupied positions extending from Genappe to Enghien; the 2nd Corps, under Lieut.-General Lord Hill, continued the line of positions by Ath to Audenarde on the Scheldt, with the 5th and 6th Divisions lying in and around Brussels, and supplying garrisons to Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, Ypres, and Mons. Of the six British divisions only the 1st, under Cooke, was composed entirely of British troops—the Guards. Hanoverians and Germans made up the strength of the others. Formidable in numbers, the Duke's army

* These are the figures cited by Mr. J. C. Ropes from Siborne's History, and may be taken as practically correct, although I have not been able to make the two authorities exactly correspond.

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contained some very untrustworthy material. The King's German Legion were splendid troops, for the most part Peninsular veterans; but five-sixths of the British infantry had never seen a shot fired in anger. The Saxon contingent mutinied at Liége on 2nd May,* were sent to the rear, and took no further part in the campaign. The Hanoverians were chiefly raw recruits, so were the Belgians, with the additional disqualification of being of very dubious fidelity; the sympathies of many of them were known to be with Napoleon. Wellington grumbled at first, as has been shown, about the kind of tools he had to work with, but he never betrayed any lack of confidence. ANN. 1815.

"It was not without surprise," he once remarked in conversation, "that I found the allied troops, when I took the command in Flanders before Waterloo, at once acknowledge and obey my authority with the same deference as my own army; and when I was at the Prussian headquarters on my way from Vienna I perceived no coldness towards me, although a strange mischance had just occurred which might naturally have created a feeling against me among the Prussians. One Monsieur Reinard, who was a leading man in the Bureau des Affaires Etrangères at Paris, had made his escape immediately on Napoleon's arrival from Elba, taking with him a treaty which had just been privately prepared between France, England, and Austria, in order to resist a threatened encroachment of the Prussians upon Saxony. This Reinard was stopped on his passage through the cantonments of the Prussian army, on suspicion he might be a spy of Napoleon's, and his papers being consequently searched and examined this secret treaty was discovered." †

* *Despatches*, xii. 346. † *De Ros MS.*

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ÆT. 29.

APPENDIX C.

The Affair of Sultanpettah.

After the description of the defeat of a party of the 33rd Regiment, under Colonel Wellesley, in the assault on the Sultanpettah tope was in type (p. 32), I found at Apsley House the following letter, written by the Duke of Wellington to Colonel Gurwood when the proofs of the first volume of the *Despatches* were under revise. As it refers to the only occasion on which Wellington met with a reverse in military operations, it seems worthy of publication even at this distant date, especially as he has illustrated it with a sketch-plan by his own hand. Reference is also made therein to certain other disputed points in Sir Arthur Wellesley's Indian service.

"S. Saye, Dec. 6, 1833.

"MY DEAR COLONEL,—Since I wrote to you last I have been to London; and have found some papers which are very interesting which I send by this occasion. . . .

"The truth is what I stated. We had not reconnoitred the ground. The Tope was on the Enemy's side of the Nullah in this way. (Here follows sketch.)

"I had carried the Nullah quite up to the mark O. My advanced guard under Capt. West of the 33d was beyond it and through the tope and the lost Prisoners on the Enemy's side of it. But we could not maintain ourselves in it. In fact we knew nothing about the matter.

"The words in Page 30 & 31 are quite right. You will find yourself borne out in respect to them by Harris's papers. I write to obtain for you a view of them. . . . In respect to my removal to Ceylon to command the troops in the Expedition, I must inform you that Lord Wellesley had been ordered to send an expedition to Batavia in the year 1800; of which he desired that I should take the command. I send you the Letters upon this subject from all the Authorities at Fort St. George; and

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my final decision that I would stay in Mysore to lead the expedition against Doondiah Wahag. . . . Then followed the Campaign against Doondiah Wahag; at the conclusion of which I was ordered to go to Trincomalee to take the command of the troops destined to attack Mauritius. ANN. 1799.

"I have not yet been able to find the First Instructions. Those which I inclose certainly don't mention Egypt. But I think that Egypt must have been mentioned in the first Instructions. Egypt is mentioned in my Letters; and it is quite clear that I turned my attention to Egypt as well as to Mauritius during my stay at Trincomalee, as I was fully informed and prepared upon the subject, as appears by the Memorandum which I gave to Sir David Baird at Bombay which is published in his Life.

"The truth is that I never entirely approved of the Expedition to Mauritius. There is among the Letter book a very remarkable one to Lord Wellesley upon that subject of the —— 1801. I don't think that I could now write a better one. But this is quite clear from these Papers. I never expected to be superseded in the command. I sailed from Trincomalee on the —— February, having received the Requisition of the Secretary of State; and it appears that on the voyage to Bombay on the 21st of Feby I received the Notification of Sir David Baird's appointment to the command. See the letter to Genl. Baird Page 27 of the 21 Feby. You will see in the End of the Letter Book Page 152 the copy of a Letter to Sir Henry Wellesley in which I expressed my feelings upon the subject of having been superseded, although originally appointed to command all these troops on each and all of the expeditions.

"I take the truth to have been that the General Officers of superior Rank remonstrated. This was very right. I am not surprized at it. I never was. But the Govr General having made the appointment ought to have had strength to stand to it. It was of the unexplained supersession that I complained."

END OF VOL. I.

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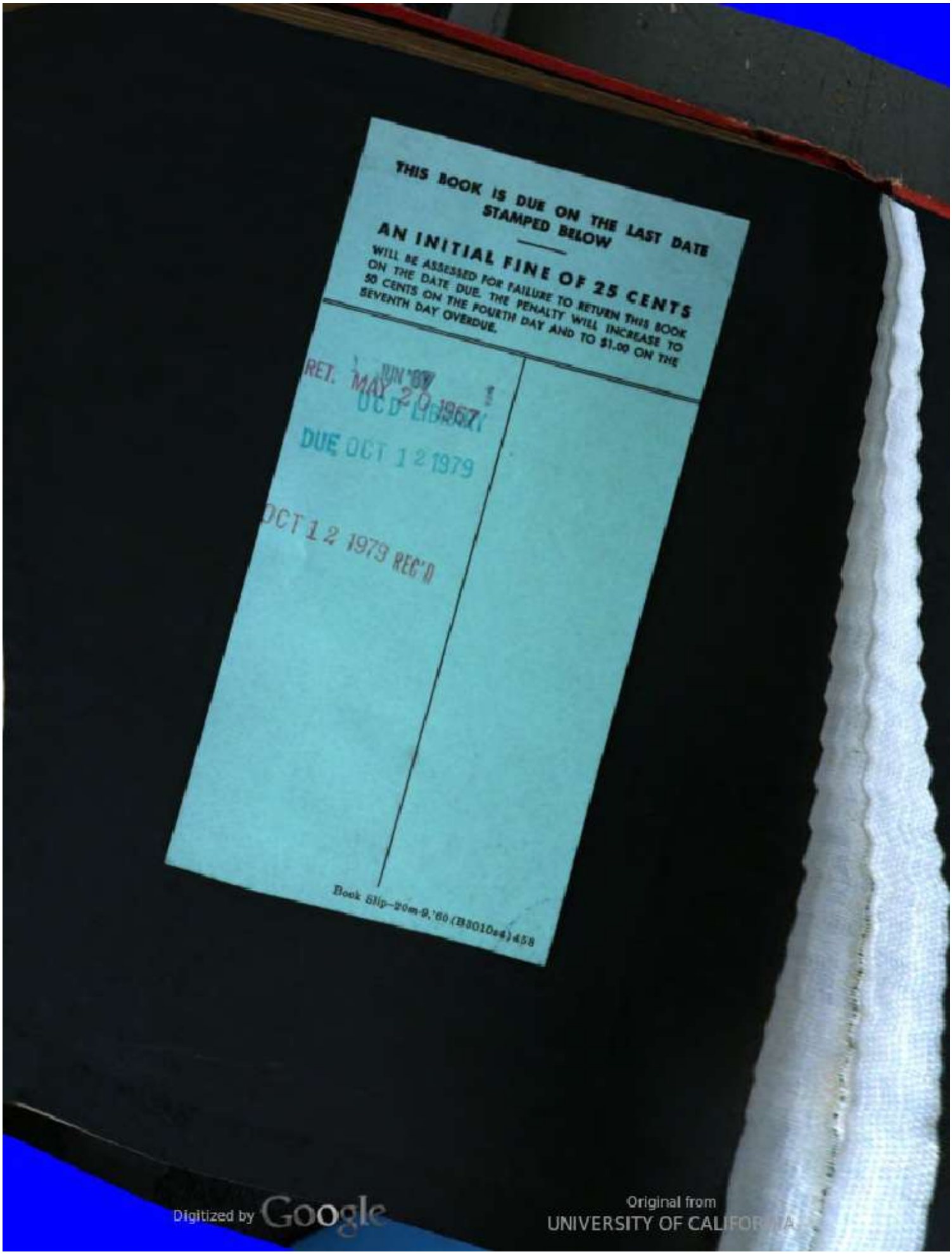
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